

Entertainment WEEKLY

MARCH 30, 2018 #1508

**GREY'S
ANATOMY
ARIZON-NO!!!**

**THE REAL STORY
BEHIND THE
CAST SHAKE-UP
P.14**

**JASON ALDEAN
EXCLUSIVE**

**AN EMOTIONAL
INTERVIEW
WITH THE
COUNTRY STAR
P.26**

READY PLAYER ONE

**ON THE SET OF
STEVEN SPIELBERG'S
POP CULTURE EASTER
EGGSTRAVAGANZA**

By ANTHONY BREZNICAN

Tye Sheridan as Wade Watts



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No cheat codes necessary! EW takes you behind the scenes of Steven Spielberg's adaptation of the major pop culture smorgasbord.

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Director-writer-actor John Krasinski and costar Emily Blunt—who are spouses in real life—explain that creating the horror film was drama-free.

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Jason Aldean

The singer was on stage in Las Vegas when the shooting started at the Route 91 Harvest Festival. Six months later, he's got a new album—and plenty to say.

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Angels in America

Nathan Lane, Andrew Garfield, and more talk about performing Tony Kushner's masterwork 25 years after its New York debut.

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ON THE COVER

Tye Sheridan
as Wade Watts in
Ready Player One.

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Pictures.

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THE WEEK'S
BEST

Sound Bites



TWEET OF THE WEEK

Mate, I've covered this already.
@JamesBlunt after John Mayer tweeted about what it means to be "beautiful"

"If you can't love yourself, how the hell you gonna love somebody else? Can I get an amen up in here?"

—RuPaul, repeating his mantra while becoming the first drag queen to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

"I want a great big giant career, but I never want to go anywhere without you. You are my home and you are my heart. Alex Karev, will you marry me?"

—Jo (Camilla Luddington), proposing to Alex (Justin Chambers), on *Grey's Anatomy*

"Oh, you don't have to be sorry. I love her as a songwriter as well."

—Katy Perry, after a contestant apologizes for loving Taylor Swift, on *American Idol*

"Vince, if you don't let me eat this ham and cheese croissant while it's still hot, I promise I will lose my s---."

—Toni-Ann (Jamie Neumann), when her FBI colleague interrupts her breakfast for the umpteenth time, on *The Looming Tower*

"You're defrosting an elbow in our microwave. We are terrible murderers!"

—Joel (Timothy Olyphant), concerned that the authorities will soon learn his wife is a cannibal, on *Santa Clarita Diet*

"Well, maybe they'll be terrible detectives!"

—Sheila (Drew Barrymore)

"This place has everything: Peeps, TED Talks, Roman J. Israel, Esq. And be sure to hit the dance floor and do a jig with Ireland's hottest Farrah-chauns, leprechauns who look like Farrah Fawcett."

—Stefon (Bill Hader), the "Weekend Update" city correspondent, describing "New York's hottest Irish club," on *Saturday Night Live*



BLUNT: SCOTT BARBOUR/GETTY IMAGES; RUPAUL: AXELLE/BAUER-GRIFFIN/FILMMAGIC; PERRY: CRAIG SJODIN/ABC; LUDDINGTON: BYRON COHEN/ABC; BARRYMORE AND OLYPHANT: SAIED ADANI/NETLIX; NEUMANN: JOJO WHILDEN/HULU; HADER: WILL HEATH/NBC

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DIFFERENT TO
THE TABLE**



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BY DESIGN**

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The Must List

THE **TOP 10** THINGS WE LOVE THIS WEEK *Edited By* | MARC SNETIKER @MARCSNETIKER



↑ Jared Padalecki, Misha Collins and Jensen Ackles

TV

SUPERNATURAL

In its 13th season, the fantasy drama still delivers new twists (alternate universes are a thing) and keeps things fun and fresh. Case in point: The Winchesters meet Scooby-Doo in an animated crossover. Zoinks! (*The CW, Thursdays, 8 p.m.*)



JENSEN ACKLES & JARED PADALECKI

The series' stars tell EW's Samantha Highfill about why their thriller still thrills

What are the key ingredients to a good *Supernatural* season?

JARED PADALECKI

Some of my favorite seasons have dealt with a very real threat, the introduction of a new character, and a little humor spattered throughout—or, as is the case with the Scooby episode, something outside the box.

JENSEN ACKLES

There's got to be a good struggle with the brothers, either with each other or with a very good foe. Having a good big bad is always key, but also having a clear mission is vital.

ACKLES, PADALECKI: FRANK OCKENFELS III/THE CW (2)

PADALECKI We've had a few seasons that went a bit too far left or right, but now the bosses have figured out that there's a recipe that works. They'll add new spices and mix it up, but they don't try and reinvent the wheel. The addition of Alexander [Calvert] this year has just been phenomenal. His character is not someone we've ever encountered before.

What's been your favorite episode of season 13?

PADALECKI I loved "Tombstone" and "Lost and Found." I always love our season premieres. Everyone's been waiting, including the actors, to find out what's happening. There's an almost tangible buzz on set.

ACKLES The "Scoobynatural" episode [which airs March 29] was such a unique experience. I've got to go with Scooby.

Looking back, which *Supernatural* season is underappreciated?

ACKLES Season 10 had Demon Dean, [who was] underappreciated and underused.

PADALECKI Season 7 has "Death's Door," which might be my favorite episode, but I'll go to season 1. We went off in so many different directions. The writers really explored a lot of avenues that set the stage for what we've been able to do since then. There was a lot of good television that was made because we hadn't yet made the rules.



Music

"SEX & CIGARETTES"

by Toni Braxton

Fresh from the reality-show circuit, R&B queen Toni Braxton is back with a steamy new single off her new album, *Sex & Cigarettes*, her first solo effort in eight years. The title song is vintage Braxton: a ballad that tracks a duplicitous man who is shamelessly flaunting his philandering ways around the house—and Toni is not having it. "How can you tell me 'I love you' / Then do the things you do? / At least try and lie to me." Un-break our hearts, Toni.

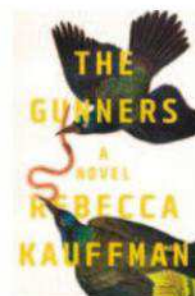


Books

THE GUNNERS

by Rebecca Kauffman

Kauffman's moving novel follows a group of childhood friends who reunite after one dies by suicide. Each character comes to terms with their dark pasts and uncertain futures—like an intimate hangout session, dashed with suspense and a few extra layers of emotional beauty. You'll find yourself thinking of *Freaks and Geeks*, *The Big Chill*, and maybe all those friends you've been meaning to text.



4 ^{TV} BARRY



On HBO's dark comedy, SNL alum Bill Hader kills in more ways than one. His titular Barry is a former Marine turned disillusioned

hitman who heads to L.A. to snuff out a target, only to find unexpected new direction in an acting class taught by a washed-up

thespian (played by Henry Winkler). It's a sublime and sad-hearted surprise. (HBO, *Sundays*, 10:30 p.m.)

THE ^{by Tim Stack} STACK!

GAY HEAT INDEX

1. CYNTHIA AS N.Y. GOVERNOR
2. RENÉE AS JUDY GARLAND
3. CHER AS MERYL'S MOM
4. XTINA AS XTINA ON HER NEXT ALBUM

3 HITS WITH

BILL HADER



You tell HBO that you'd like to create, direct, and star on a show about a hitman wanting to become an actor. How would you summarize that conversation?

We walked them through the first episode, and then it was weird, because we're essentially pitching a 30-minute comedy, and our reference points were *Taxi Driver* and *Unforgiven*. Because it's HBO, they didn't bat an eye. I said, "Imagine Travis Bickle or William Munny finding salvation with the *Waiting for Guffman* people, but the violence was going to be very real."

How is being an actor like being a hitman? For starters, we had to call you under your alias.

Right! I was always very reticent [to do that], and finally people were prank-calling my room, asking me what the hottest clubs in town were. I was like, "Okay, I gotta get an alias."... You're living out of a suitcase on location and you're traveling a lot. It's a lot of sitting around waiting for a couple minutes of excitement, then more waiting, and then a couple more minutes of both concentration and excitement—and then more waiting.

Your "bad" acting in class rivals your good acting on the show. Can you give aspiring good actors a few tips on bad acting?

It's good to not know what to do with your hands. It's good to overplay the simplest of emotions. Watch true-crime reenactments, because people overreact a bit more than makes sense. Another thing is either too much eye contact or zero eye contact. Also, just read lines by rote. [Don't] react to your scene partner, even if they're doing something completely different. By the way, I've done *all* of these things.

Music

CALIFORNIA

by Diplo

The Florida-bred multihyphenate's first solo release since 2013 includes six new jangly, palm-tree-infused tunes, along with appearances from worthy guest stars Lil Yachty, Santigold, and DRAM. It's guaranteed to keep you warm and worry-free, especially until summer really hits.



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6

Movies

ISLE OF DOGS

Fans of 2009's *Fantastic Mr. Fox* now have another stylish stop-motion flick to swoon over. Master of quirk Wes Anderson has whipped up a moving animated adventure about a pack of quarantined dogs (led by Bryan Cranston)

who help a young boy in a dystopian Japan reconnect with his detained pup. Tears will be shed; fleas, not so much.



UTILITY PACK

Here's how often Wes Anderson's movies have unleashed Isle's troupe of tamed actors

FIRST TIMER!

Actor	Count
Bryan Cranston	3
Edward Norton	3
Jeff Goldblum	3
Bob Balaban	3
Bill Murray	8

DOGS, TAGGED

Five ragtag canines. Five famous voices. Match the dog to its owner!

- | | | | | | |
|----------|---|-------|----------------|--|----------|
| A |  | Boss | Bryan Cranston |  | 1 |
| B |  | Rex | Edward Norton |  | 2 |
| C |  | King | Jeff Goldblum |  | 3 |
| D |  | Chief | Bob Balaban |  | 4 |
| E |  | Duke | Bill Murray |  | 5 |

ANSWER KEY

1. BOSS 5. BILL MURRAY | 2. REX 2. EDWARD NORTON | 3. KING 3. JEFF GOLDBLUM | 4. CHIEF 4. BOB BALABAN | 5. DUKE 5. JEFF GOLDBLUM

TV

THE AMERICANS



Last season, FX's spy-family drama burned slow as ice, but the final, sixth season promises a thrilling climax for Philip (Matthew Rhys) and Elizabeth Jennings (Keri Russell) and a historical, if fictional, reckoning between eternally squabbling frenemies America and Russia. Get a room, you two. (FX, Wednesdays, 10 p.m.)

REQUIEM FOR SEASON 5

The Americans has always been, let's say, a gradual thriller. The Jenningses are espionage longtimers, engaged in micro-cosmic bits of spycraft with macro implications. But the penultimate season felt downright slow as lengthy subplots tested viewer patience. You'll get comparative whiplash from the momentum in season 6, which throws the far-flung cast into a big world-altering plot. It doesn't quite justify last year's doldrums, but now it's easier to appreciate the calm before the nuclear storm.

ISLE OF DOGS: FOX SEARCHLIGHT; CRANSTON: M. BENNETT/DAVE BENNETT/WIREIMAGE; NORTON: JAYLOR HILL/GETTY IMAGES; GOLDBLUM: FRANCOIS G. DURAND/GETTY IMAGES; BALABAN: DIA DIPSAP/LO/GETTY IMAGES; MURRAY: STEPHEN HODERATH/GETTY IMAGES; THE AMERICANS: PATRICK HANROW/FX



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YOUR TRACTOR
MIGHT BE AN SUV.
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OVEN ROASTED
TURKEY BREAST
IS CRAFTED WITH
NOTHING BUT HEART
AND HARD WORK,

YOU'RE
CLOSER
TO THE
FARM
THAN
YOU
THINK



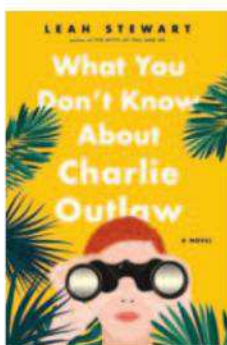
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*Except for those naturally occurring in the celery juice powder and sea salt.

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8



Books

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT CHARLIE OUTLAW

by Leah Stewart

This story of a red-hot actor, who grapples with being kidnapped on a remote island while his ex grapples with dwindling fame, is more than a glitzy Hollywood tale. Inspired by real-life celebrity stories, it's a surprisingly insightful, even poignant meditation on stardom.

WHAT WE DO KNOW ABOUT CHARLIE OUTLAW

Countless juicy A-list details are sprinkled into *Charlie Outlaw*, but two stories in particular provided key inspiration for Stewart.

The kidnapping of Charlie Outlaw is based on the time Benedict Cumberbatch was carjacked and kidnapped by six men in South Africa—really!—while filming a miniseries in 2004.

The arc of Charlie's ex-girlfriend Josie, meanwhile, loosely resembles *Buffy* alum Sarah Michelle Gellar. Josie played a badass former cult-TV character whom we meet as she's figuring out how to make her next move. It's familiar by design: The author is an avowed fan of *Buffy*, and the fantasy's legacy greatly informed her novel.

9

TV

ROSEANNE

If only all revivals could get it as right as *Roseanne*, which is as funny, sweet, smart, and relevant as ever in its prime-time return. Don't be put off by a handful of political jokes—the show's focus is still the day-to-day struggles (and victories) of the Conner clan. (ABC, Tuesdays, 8 p.m.)



THE KIDS SPEAK!

Two former youngsters from the Conner household, Lecy Goranson (*Becky*) and Michael Fishman (*D.J.*), reveal that when it comes to *Roseanne*, you can always go home again

There's been talk for years of reviving *Roseanne*, right?

MICHAEL FISHMAN

Roseanne and I have talked about it over the years because we've worked together a lot. She's done little blips of where she thought everybody might be. I think what's happened is this beautiful combination of everybody's ideas and this amazing writing staff.

LECY GORANSON Sara Gilbert texted me to ask if I would be interested in doing *Roseanne* again, and I said, "Hell, yeah!" She said she did this

Roseanne skit with John Goodman on *The Talk*, and it just felt right. I thought that was nice, just the feeling of connectedness.

What was it like walking onto the re-created set of the Conner home?

FISHMAN Coming back as an adult has been beautiful. Everybody and everything is exactly how I remember it and exactly the way I wanted.

GORANSON It felt so comfortable, though I could immediately tell the differences, as wonderful as the art department is.

The feel was the same, but it was obviously not the same couch. The picture of the dogs playing pool wasn't up! But really it was about being impressed by what they had re-created and realizing that I had spent a very large part of my life in that home.

So is it time to start thinking about season 2?

GORANSON That is something that is in the air. We've had such a great time that I am 99 percent sure that everybody is on board for next season if it happens.



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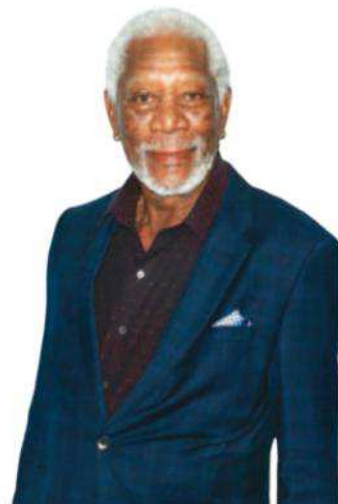
Rx only

10

Streaming

MARCH OF THE PENGUINS 2: THE NEXT STEP

Thirteen years after the nature doc won both audiences and an Oscar, filmmaker Luc Jacquet and narrator Morgan Freeman return to the chilly tundra for a heartwarming follow-up about a penguin father and his (spoiler: also penguin) son. (Hulu)



MARCH OF THE PENGUINS 2: THE NEXT STEP: DAISY GIARDINI/HULU; FREEMAN: JIM SPELLMAN/WIREIMAGE

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THREE MORE FLAVORS
OF LEFT TWIX®



IS THREE MORE FLAVORS
OF RIGHT TWIX.®

WHAT TO STREAM THIS WEEK

► Moon

NETFLIX

Before he was winning Oscars, Sam Rockwell was all alone on the moon for three long years in 2009's under-the-radar sci-fi slow-burner. The actor plays a lonely lunar miner gradually going insane; Kevin Spacey voices his robot companion, which is too bad, but at least it's better than seeing him.



► The Blue Lagoon

AMAZON

A very young Brooke Shields and Christopher Atkins spend a lot of time undressed on a tropical island trying to survive after a shipwreck maroons them. When puberty strikes and there are no adults or any form of society to guide them, they pretty much just get it on. Oh, and we should've mentioned—they're *cousins*.



► Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

FILMSTRUCK

When unhappily married George (Richard Burton) and Martha (Elizabeth Taylor) invite a younger couple over, the night quickly dissolves into vicious taunts, humiliating secrets, and a whole lot of drunk babbling in this iconic 1966 black comedy.



► Ghostbusters

NETFLIX

Who you gonna stream? Dan Aykroyd and friends, in this never-old 1984 classic about parapsychologists who set up shop in NYC to deal with several strange somethings in the neighborhood—and simultaneously inspire Halloween costumes for years to come.

10 ¹/₂

Music



"FOUND/TONIGHT"

by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Ben Platt

Miranda and Platt, Broadway's sweetest pair of princes since *Into the Woods*, swoon in this invigorating, heartfelt *Hamilton*/*Dear Evan Hansen* mash-up, released as a surprise charity single to benefit the March for Our Lives initiative.



MORE FLAVORS. SAME SIDES.

Anatomy of a Shake-up

Jessica Capshaw and Sarah Drew are the latest beloved cast members whose time in Shondaland has run out.

BY LYNETTE RICE

A

AFTER *GREY'S ANATOMY* REVEALED THAT Jessica Capshaw and Sarah Drew were leaving the ABC show for creative reasons on March 8, fans immediately launched a petition to save their jobs, a phenomenon that's happened no fewer than six times during the drama's 13-year run on ABC—most notably after Patrick Dempsey's McDreamy was killed after a car accident in season 11. Despite threats of a boycott after losing Dempsey, Sandra Oh, Sara Ramirez, and Chyler Leigh, among other fan favorites, the show remains the network's No. 1 drama.

But these most recent departures are different. Capshaw played Dr. Arizona Robbins, an openly lesbian character, while Drew's Dr. April Kepner was a devout Christian. Shonda Rhimes acknowledged the significance of their characters by saying



↑
(Clockwise from top)
Ellen Pompeo;
Sarah Drew;
Jessica Capshaw and Sara Ramirez

that “both Arizona Robbins and April Kepner are not only beloved but iconic—both the LGBTQ and devout Christian communities are underrepresented on TV,” before bidding the women adieu. “I will be forever grateful to both Jessica and Sarah for bringing these characters to life with such vibrant performances and for inspiring women around the globe,” she added. “They will always be a part of our Shondaland family.”

Just not on the payroll, it seems. Their ousters come after star Ellen Pompeo signed a new, two-year deal that at a reported \$550,000-plus per episode would make her the highest-paid woman on TV. Showrunner Krista Vernoff tweeted it was wrong to suggest the departures were related to Pompeo's new salary. It may be a false correlation, but one studio head who recently renegotiated the salaries on an established show on broadcast TV told EW that he would have been forced to cut a part-time player if the lead had asked for an exorbitant raise. A Shondaland insider insists it was all about the characters running their course, which Vernoff alluded to in a statement. “As

writers, our job is to follow the stories where they want to go and sometimes that means saying goodbye to characters we love.”

Fortunately, there seems to be no bad blood at Grey Sloan Memorial.

Less than a week after her departure was announced, Drew snagged the role of Cagney on CBS' remake of the '80s cop drama *Cagney & Lacey* (a role that earned Sharon Gless two Emmys on the original). Even though she's expected to appear on *Grey's* until season's end, *Grey's* producers are going out of their way to accommodate Drew's new shooting schedule. “They said they love her and would do anything for her,” says a source on the CBS pilot. As for Capshaw—who's also expected to appear on *Grey's* through May—she posted a heartfelt message on social media to her boss of nine years. “I am grateful that I have gotten to bring [Arizona] to life and for the life that she has brought to me. I am sad to see her go, but I am consoled by the idea that she will continue to live on and on in all of our consciences and our imaginations. Shonda, thank you for the ride on this incredible roller coaster.” What a very apt description.

Inside the Mind of TV's Most Terrifying Tyke

The *Family Guy* team explains why they used a therapy session to give Stewie a new voice—and perhaps his darkest turn. **BY DAN SNIERSON**

D

DEEP INTO THE 16TH SEASON OF *FAMILY Guy*, Stewie was finally exposed as a faker. And he'd never been more real.

The March 18 episode of the Fox comedy transported viewers into the psyche of this tyke of terror, where they received the semi-tragic truth about him, not to mention a chill down their spine. “Stewie probably learns more about himself in a 25-minute analysis session,” sums up EP Richard Appel, “than Woody Allen has learned in 25 years.”

Sent to school psychologist Dr. Pritchfield (Ian McKellen) after pushing a classmate down the stairs, the indignant enfant terrible (voiced by *Family Guy* creator Seth MacFarlane) kicks off his therapy session with a five-and-a-half-minute monologue that expertly eviscerates the shrink. He then riffs on his much-speculated-about-even-though-he's-just-a-baby sexuality—insisting that although he's heterosexual, he and Grant Gustin would make “the most adorable Instagram couple”—before giving in to epiphanies about his own insecurities and revealing that his British accent is bloody fake, or as he calls it, “a coat of armor to get me through the day.” And with that,

audiences heard Stewie's childlike American voice for the first time.

Family Guy producers initially considered featuring a coming-out moment (one way or the other) for Stewie, but writer Gary Janetti explained that he wanted to “dig deeper” into the mind of this self-aware child who feels lonely and alienated because he's different from his classmates, yet fears being like everybody else. “I didn't know if Seth would go for it,” notes Janetti of the accent revelation. “[But] he instantly read the script in that voice that he does in the episode, and it's very disarming. It felt very true. When you feel like you don't fit in anyplace, you construct a bit of a facade to protect yourself from the world. [Stewie's] is just extraordinarily sophisticated. What would that mean if he could release it and be more authentic—and himself? Does he want to?”

Nope. After Stewie's breakthrough of vulnerability, Dr. Pritchfield accidentally reawakens the old Stewie, who vows that “nobody will ever know the real me.” And

when his analyst/ally unexpectedly has trouble breathing and asks for his heart medication, Stewie does nothing...and watches him die slowly. For a hellion who has perpetrated horrific acts—attempted murder of his mother, actual murder of New Brian—this deed felt more chilling and less cartoonish, as self-preservation triumphed darkly over self-improvement. “He chooses the way out that's a bit fearful,” says Janetti. “It's what he knows.”

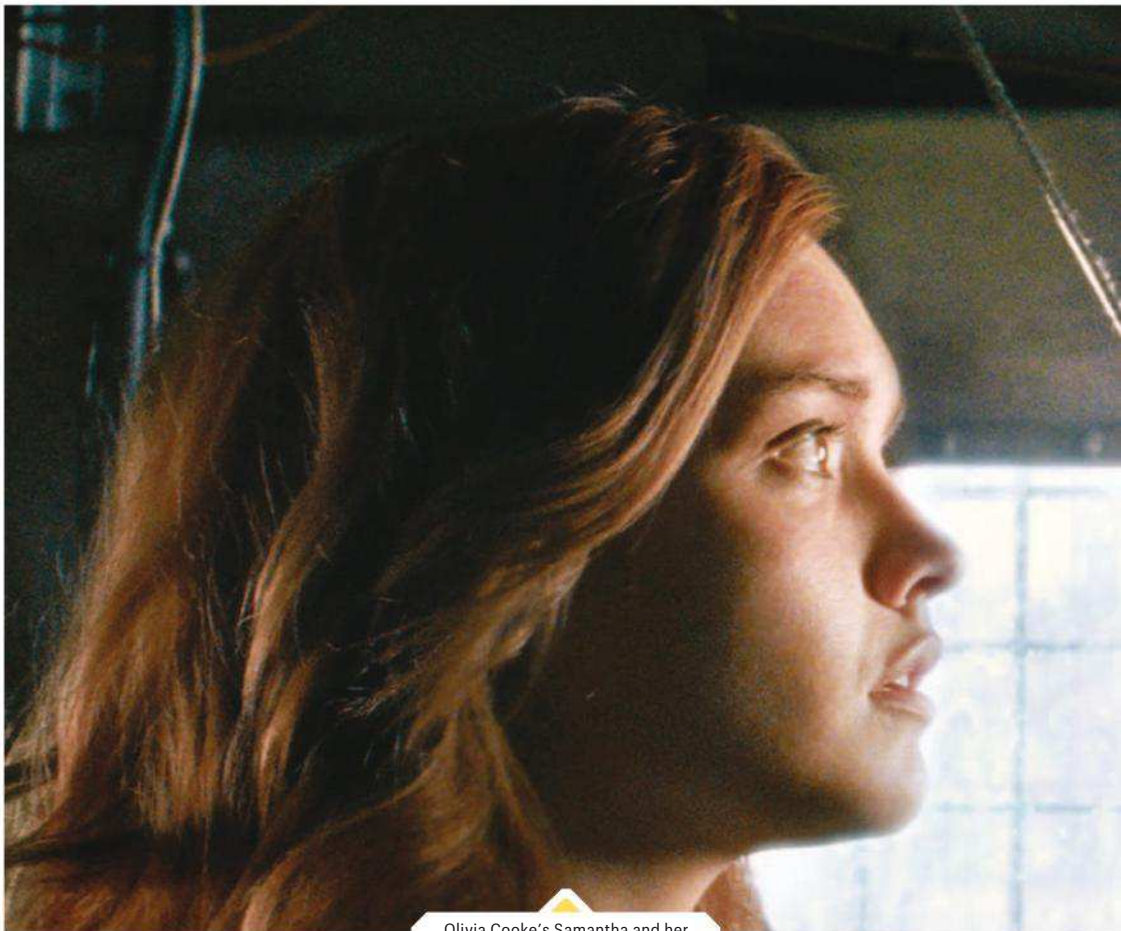
Although Stewie tells Dr. Pritchfield that it's “no bigs” to let him die, he confesses that night to Brian only that he did “something awful.” The episode ends with Stewie in the dark, unable to sleep, eyes wide open. “I wanted us to see perhaps for the very first time that he's seeing a consequence to his actions, and things are much more complicated than he initially thought,” says Janetti. “The ambivalence with which it ends was important. It's just more interesting—and it makes *him* more interesting.” Maybe more terrifying, too.

→
Ian
McKellen
as Dr.
Pritchfield
and Seth
MacFarlane
as Stewie on
Family Guy

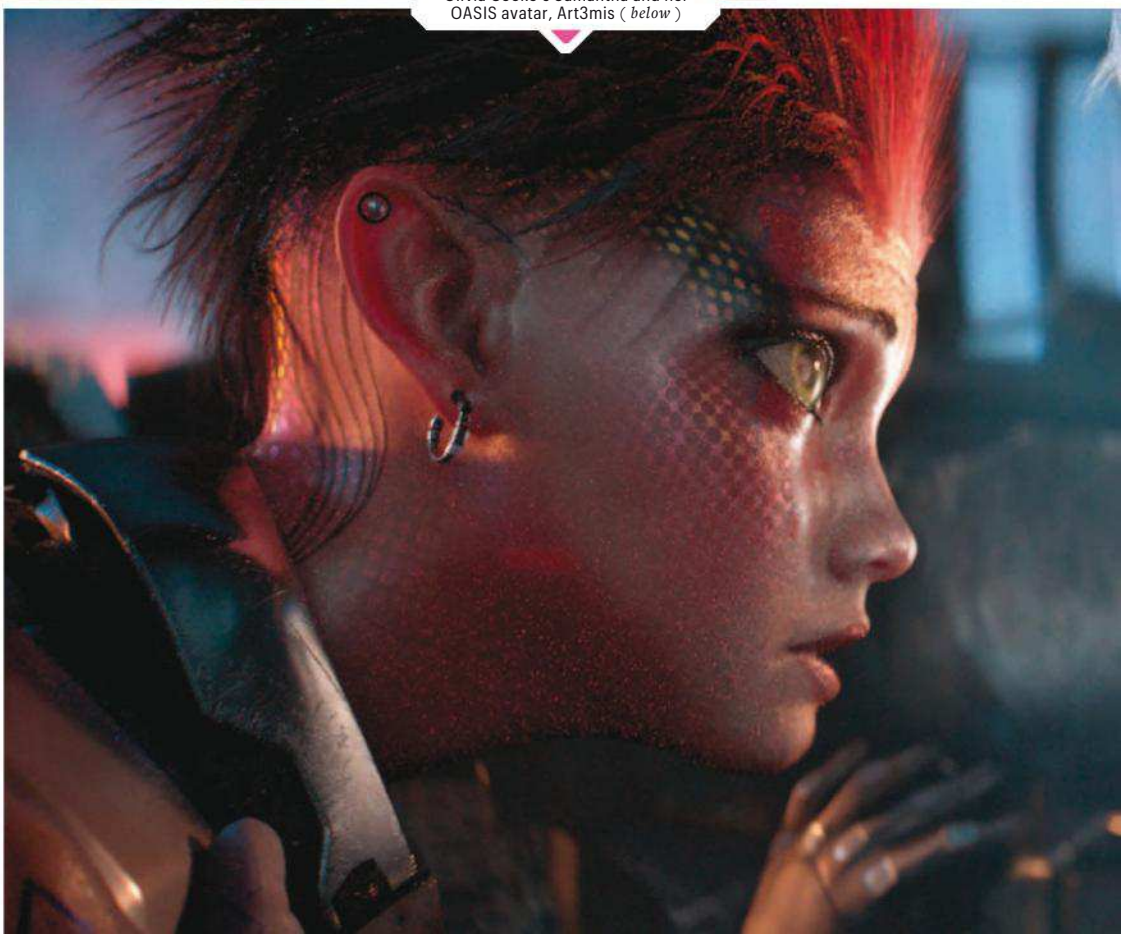


THE FAST LANE

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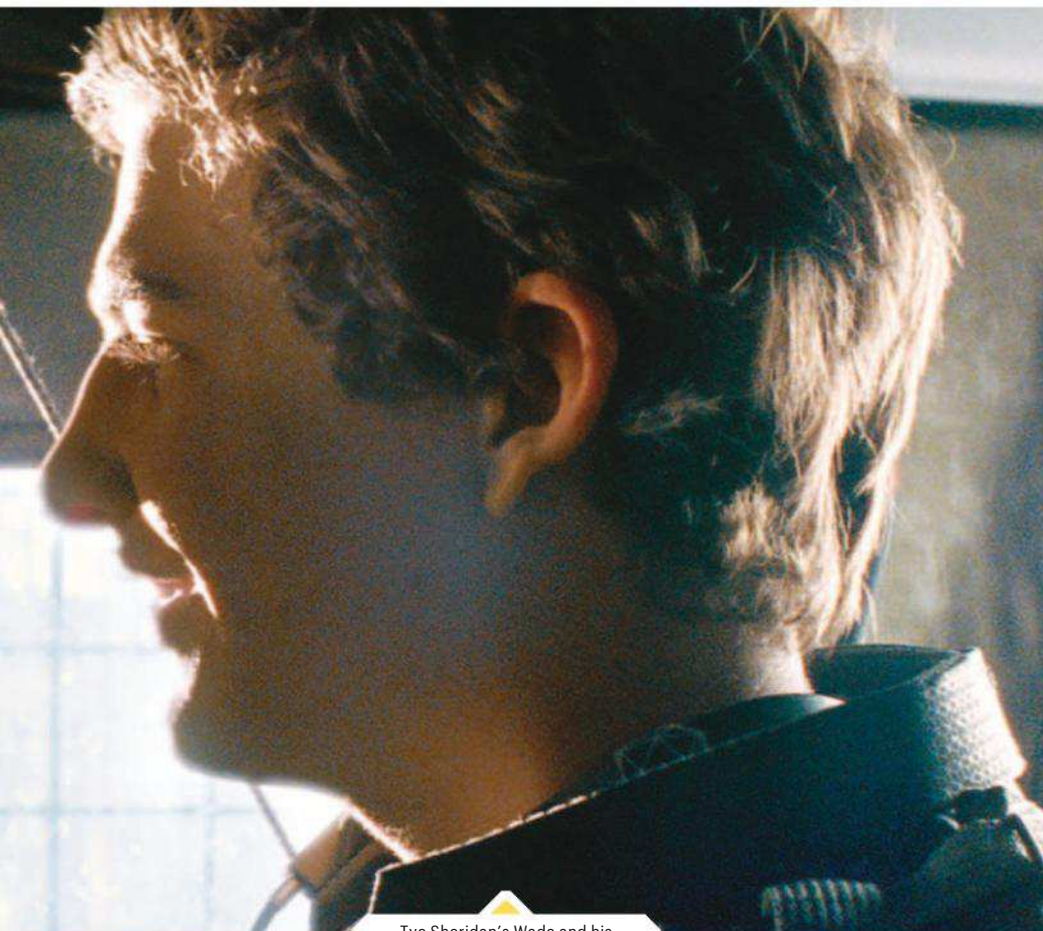
Olivia Cooke's Samantha and her
OASIS avatar, Art3mis (below)



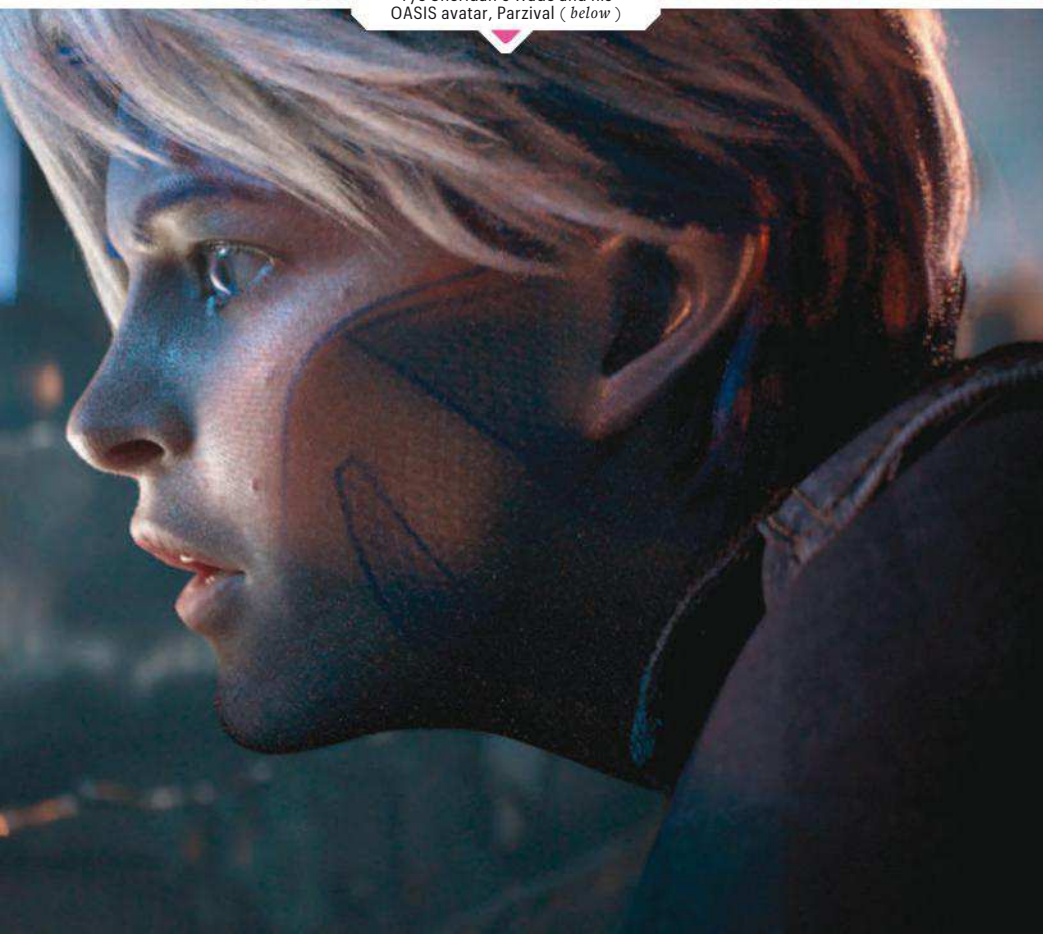
BY

ANTHONY
BREZNICAN
@BREZNICAN

SCENES OF STEVEN SPIELBERG'S ADAPTATION OF



Tye Sheridan's Wade and his
OASIS avatar, Parzival (*below*)



READY PLAYER ONE.

THE BIGGEST POP CULTURE SMORGASBORD TO EVER HIT THE SCREEN.

READY PLAYER ONE



STEVEN SPIELBERG IS PLAYING CATCH ME IF YOU CAN WITH HIS PAST.

Before setting off to make a movie from Ernest Cline's 2011 novel *Ready Player One*, a futuristic tale of a treasure hunt through a virtual-reality universe that's heavy on '80s geek culture, the filmmaker who defined that decade pledged to leave his own movies out of the picture. There was one exception: He allowed the hero to drive the time-traveling DeLorean from *Back to the Future*, which Spielberg executive-produced. Beyond that, the director didn't want the new movie to become a series of shout-outs to his older ones.

His crew vowed otherwise. Thus began a covert campaign to sneak Spielbergia into the background of *Ready Player One*, often by visually referencing movies he produced rather than directed. Graffiti on one wall of the dystopian real-world set included the grinning green **JAWS** of a fiend from *Gremlins*. Spielberg killed it. A diner on one street during a chase was a wink to the villainous bank-robbing brothers from *The Goonies*. "We had a sly Fratelli's Diner, but we got caught," production designer Adam Stockhausen says. "He nixed it."

Even *Schindler's List* got a nod. *Ready Player One*'s orphaned hero Wade Watts (*X-Men: Apocalypse*'s Tye Sheridan) lives in the Stacks, a slum of old trailers welded together Jenga-style. During a tour of his apartment, EW spotted a copy of Thomas Keneally's 1982 book on a shelf. The paperback had the book's original title, *Schindler's Ark*.

(PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS PAGE) WARNER BROS. PICTURES (3)



(Clockwise from far left) Sho, Aech, Parzival, Art3mis, and Daito talk to the Curator, keeper of OASIS creator James Halliday's history; Halliday's avatar is the wizard Anorak, seen here with the three keys necessary to solve his final puzzle; Sheridan, Cooke, Win Morisaki, and Philip Zhao try to survive an IOI attack; Lena Waithe (the real-life Aech) on the run with Sheridan



Stockhausen said nothing when it was pointed out. He only raised a finger to his lips and waved his hand: *Don't tell the boss.*

More than a year and a half later, with *Ready Player One*'s March 29 debut nearing, Spielberg acknowledges that what he tried to stop during principal photography managed to sneak in via **The Post** production phase, particularly when the film ventures into the pop-culture-crowded CG realm of the virtual-reality OASIS.

"I think a lot of the digital artists were trying to get some of their favorite '80s cultural references in there, you know?" Spielberg says. "And having seen every shot 30 times as we go through all the different steps from pre-viz to animatic to final, I started noticing little things. They snuck a gremlin in."

He let them have that one. "I said, 'Well, I guess it's too late to take that guy out.' So he survived the cut." In the epic final battle, keep your **EYES** open to spot the little monster that hates bright light.

A movie and games fanatic himself, Spielberg was far more eager to showcase the work of others. "I didn't corner the '80s market," he says. "There's plenty to go around."

AS MUCH AS READY PLAYER ONE RELISHES A GEEK OBSESSION WITH yesteryear, it actually jiu-jitsu's nostalgia to craft a cautionary tale about glorifying your past while your future disappears. "Escape has its pleasurable and medicinal place, but total escape should not be a destination," Spielberg says.

That fact was somewhat obscured by trailers that tried to **Hook** fans by highlighting the Iron Giant, Freddy Krueger, Duke Nukem, Stephen King's Christine, the A-Team van, and other fan-fave iconography. Instead, a backlash began to mount: Was *Ready Player One* more like *Name-Dropping: The Motion Picture*? Those concerns were largely dispelled by a rapturous screening at the SXSW festival in mid-March, which ended with a standing ovation in the theater and the kind of rare tweet-storm that showers praise instead of scorn.

"The movie isn't really about nostalgia," Spielberg tells EW.



GOTTA CATCH'EM ALL

READY PLAYER ONE
OVERFLOWS
WITH POP CULTURE,
BUT THERE'S AN
EXCEPTIONAL NUMBER
OF RECOGNIZABLE
VEHICLES IN AECH'S
INTERGALACTIC
GARAGE

1

Here's the Eagle 5, the Winnebago Chieftain 33 that Lone Starr and Barf piloted in Mel Brooks' 1987 *Star Wars* spoof, *Spaceballs*.

2

The yellow object is the PO-024 Field Repair E-Frame from the 1993–94 animated series *Exosquad*. Good for helping Aech lift and weld.

“Nostalgia is only the window dressing—out your side windows, but the movie takes place out your windshield. It’s a race. It’s a competition for control of the OASIS.”

In the year 2045, Earth is a mess. It’s polluted. It’s impoverished. The only getaway from these doldrums is to pull on your haptic body gear and visor, and relive the glory days amid **AI** characters in a digital world where you can be anyone and surround yourself with anything.

The OASIS is the brainchild of billionaire James Halliday (*Bridge of Spies* Oscar winner Mark Rylance), who was a cross between Steve Jobs and Willy Wonka. Emphasis on *was*. Upon his death, he released a message: Solve a series of intricate geek puzzles to collect three keys, and you will claim both his vast fortune and ownership of the OASIS.

Wade Watts, operating in the OASIS under the name Parzival, is on the hunt for this holy grail. So is most of the rest of the planet. He’s best friends with Aech (*The Chi* creator and *Master of None* writer-performer

Lena Waithe), who appears in the form of an orc-like male colossus and runs a garage where damaged digital vehicles can be repaired for the right cryptocurrency price.

“[Aech] is sort of like Mr. T meets Michael Clarke Duncan meets Ice Cube meets Rambo,” Waithe says. “There’s so many machismo characters that you got to meld it down and create it into one character. There’s a little Terminator in there as well.”

Waithe, a pioneering LGBTQ artist, says Aech is symbolic of people who wish to live an identity that’s different from the one they’re born into. “She’s pretending to be something she isn’t, but in that sense it’s still really her personality,” Waithe says. “She had to have that swagger, that confidence. That’s a privilege that



5
The 1961 Ferrari 250 GT California from 1986's *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Fewer than 100 were made. Cameron's dad had one; so does Aech.

6
Tough to see, but these are the twin nose cones of a Thunderfighter from the 1979–81 TV series *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*.

7
The Swordfish II from the 1998–99 TV show *Cowboy Bebop*. In the OASIS, you can shrink your vehicle to toy size. Note the one on Aech's workbench.

8
Open the pod bay doors, HAL. This is the EVA pod from Stanley Kubrick's 1968 classic *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

3
Hanging down from the ceiling is a Colonial Viper starfighter, which took out Cylons on the original '70s TV series *Battlestar Galactica*.

4
Programmed for "urban pacification," this walker is the Enforcement Droid, Series 209 (or ED-209, for short), from 1987's *RoboCop*.

9
The legs of the enormous metal man from 1999's animated *The Iron Giant*. Look for the complete thing in *Ready Player One*'s final battle.

maybe she doesn't have in the real world."

But there's always a dark side. For some, the OASIS is a place where they obsessively pose and front, rather than unlock their true heart and soul. "I think it points a finger at this image we feel we have to live up to or strive to be," Sheridan says. "I think a lot of people, especially a lot of kids right now, are struggling with being themselves and embracing that, embracing who they actually are and coming face-to-face with what that means."

In a sense, he and Waithe are talking about the same thing: The OASIS can be a place to find yourself, or it can be a place to hide from yourself. For Sheridan, the message is "People will love you for who you are. Although it may take a while, you'll find those friends."



Steven Spielberg directing Sheridan and Cooke

DURING THEIR QUEST, PARZIVAL AND AECH BECOME ALLIES WITH Art3mis, an equally clever pop culture savant (played by *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*'s Olivia Cooke) who spirits around the OASIS on the crimson motorbike from the Japanese anime classic *Akira*. They're joined by two other gunters (a term for "egg hunters," as in Easter eggs): Daito (Win Morisaki, singer in the Japanese pop band PrizmaX), who appears in the guise of a samurai warrior, and the fearsome ninja Sho (14-year-old newcomer Philip Zhao).

As they get closer to solving the clues that will lead them to inherit the OASIS, they become known to everyone as the High Five. But to the giant tech conglomerate IOI, they are Public Enemy No. 1.

There's **SOMETHING EVIL** about IOI. It's headed by Nolan Sorrento (*Rogue One*'s Ben Mendelsohn), who's leading a massive operation of researchers trying to solve the puzzle and take control of the OASIS. It's a cash grab. Since people are addicted to this freeware, IOI would like to restrict access and start charging a premium—but given the vast income disparity, that means only the wealthy may be able to visit this paradise built of ones, zeros, and imagination.

Sorrento has a deeper philosophy at work. He blames the preoccupation with the OASIS for creating **THE LOST WORLD** he has to inhabit in real life. "They want to spend all their time going dink-donk-dink-dink," Mendelsohn says, doing a grown-up's version of videogame sound effects. Sorrento's goal: "Monetize it. And get these young people working!"

To him, the OASIS may be an **ESCAPE TO NOWHERE**, but to the High Five, it's a way of becoming whatever they dream they can be. "It's about idealists versus corporate greed," Spielberg says.

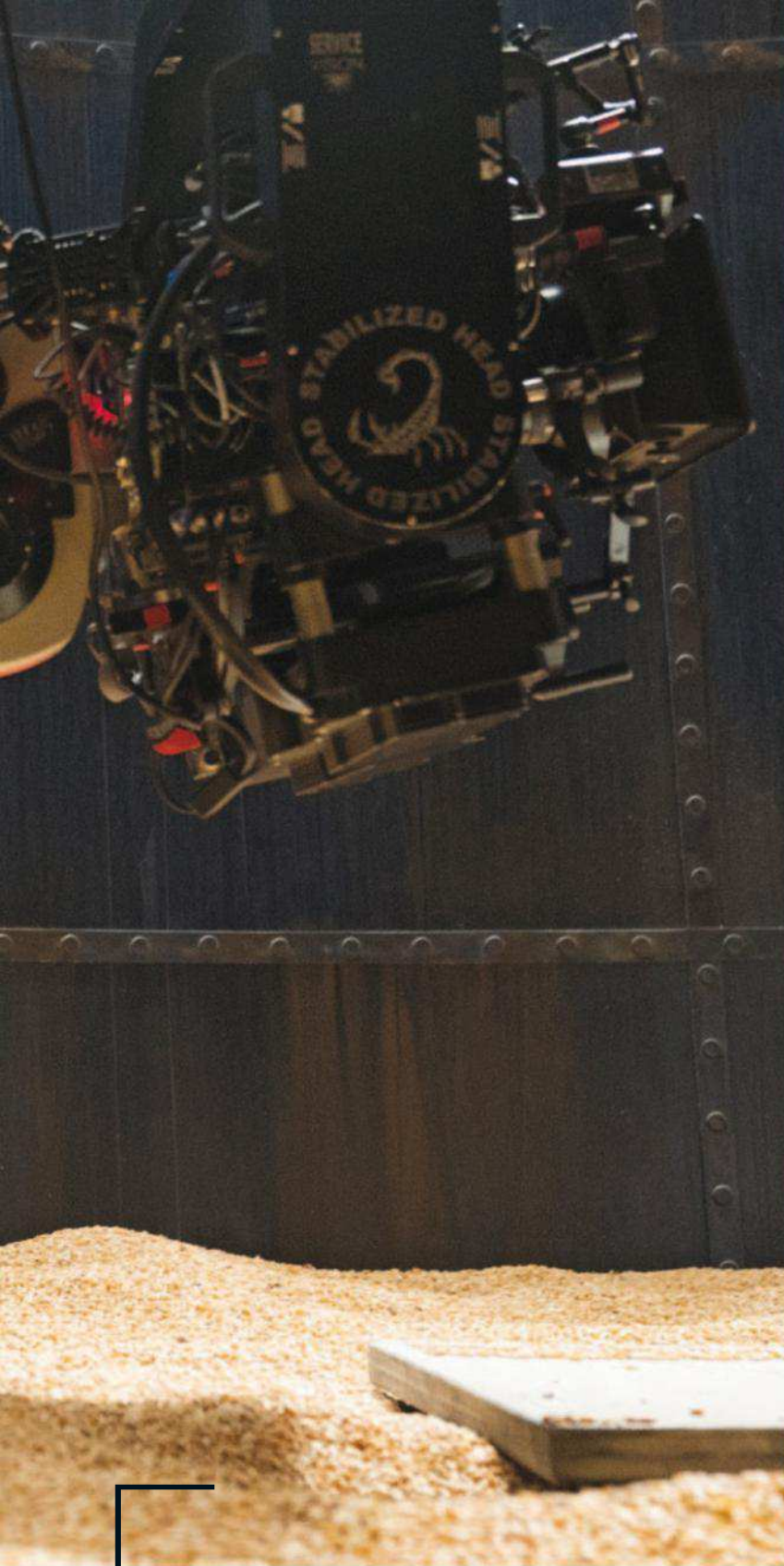
In the behind-the-scenes battle playing out—the **DUEL** between Spielberg and his Easter-egg-hiding crew—the director seems to have come out on top. Apart from the gremlin in the battle scene, he has eliminated their covert homages to his filmography, even *Schindler's Ark*.

It goes by fast in the finished movie, but a glimpse of that shelf in the Stacks does not appear to include the book.

If you're going to hide an Ark, don't be surprised if Spielberg, of all people, manages to find it. ♦



SILENC



MAKING A PROFOUND THRILLER CAN BE SCARY, BUT DIRECTOR-WRITER-ACTOR **JOHN KRASINSKI** AND COSTAR **EMILY BLUNT**—WHO ARE SPOUSES IN REAL LIFE—EXPLAIN THAT CREATING THE HORROR FILM **A QUIET PLACE** (OUT APRIL 6) WAS DRAMA-FREE.

BY SARA VILKOMERSON @VILKOMERSON



THE LEAVES ARE JUST BEGINNING TO turn on a picturesque farm in Dutchess County, N.Y. It's October 2017, and production of *A Quiet Place* is nearing its end. John Krasinski is on triple duty as writer, director, and star, but if the gregarious 38-year-old is feeling stressed, it doesn't show as he teases the young actors who play his children—Noah Jupe and Millicent Simmonds—before settling back into his director's chair. The mood is noticeably cheerful for any set, but particularly remarkable for this one: *A Quiet Place* is a rather terrifying thriller about a family living in silence in order to survive a mysterious threat that hunts via sound. (Trust us, the less you know before seeing it, the better.)

"People are like, *Why did you do a horror movie?*" says Krasinski. "I didn't. I chose to do a family movie that happens to be scary." He and wife Emily Blunt had just had their second daughter when he read the spec script by Bryan Woods and Scott Beck. "I thought this story could be the greatest metaphor for parenthood—I mean, it'd be a terribly cheesy tagline: What would you *really* do for your kids?"

Rewriting the screenplay came easily—"I knew everything that I wanted to do in three hours"—and it was Blunt who first suggested he direct the film (his third after 2009's *Brief Interviews With Hideous Men* and 2016's *The Hollars*). After she read the completed script, Blunt told Krasinski he couldn't let anyone but her play the role. "It is the greatest compliment of my entire career," he says with a smile. The couple had always been interested, if slightly wary, about working together. "A few weeks before we started, it was like, is this a good idea?"

IS GOLDEN



(From top)
Emily Blunt; Noah
Jupe, Millicent
Simmonds,
and Krasinski

Well, we have our answer. *A Quiet Place* premiered on March 9 at the South by Southwest Film Festival in Austin, and the audience went simply nuts for the thriller and for Blunt's powerhouse performance. Last week the couple, comfortably seated together on a sofa in New York City, still seemed awed by the overwhelmingly positive early reviews. "All the seeds John planted—they didn't miss anything," says Blunt of the audience they sat in with. "The gasping, the laughing, the cheering—it was amazing. This is a surreal moment for sure." She smiles. "The fact that we get to share it is wild."

Emily, what was it like the first time John directed you?

EMILY BLUNT We were terrified the night before. You just don't know, you know? How you like to work and how you apply yourself at work and you don't know if those processes are going to crack heads sometimes. Which is not to say it was sunbeams and rainbows the whole time. [Laughs] But I just knew he had my best interests at heart, and

I had his, and we realized just how aligned we really are creatively. It was eye-opening. It was so new to us, we hadn't had that before. We discovered different sides to each other that go beyond us being a married couple.

JOHN KRASINSKI I will say—and not just 'cause she's sitting right here—that no one else could have done this part.

You told me on set that Rob Marshall—who just directed Emily in *Mary Poppins Returns*—predicted that you wouldn't know just how good an actress Emily really is until you directed her yourself.

BLUNT Oh, God. Rob is so sweet to me.

KRASINSKI He was dead right. I'd forget she was my wife—which is hard to do—because she's just that good. To let someone rip like that, and then they have the confidence to say, "What do you think we should do differently on the next take?" You're like, "Is there a next take? That was so good." I think it helped that we had so many discussions about character before shooting.

BLUNT A lot of strange dinner conversations. Over a lot of whiskey. [Laughs] We obviously have our own secret language from the almost decade we've been together, but I will say we absolutely hit the jackpot with Noah and Millicent. They're the most loving, giving, and prepared, soulful pair. Honestly, every night we'd go to bed and say, *Thank God for those kids*.

KRASINSKI It's true. Everyone always says working with kids slows your day down. Not these kids. Not only are they incredible actors, but people, too. There were a lot of tears on the last days. Those kids bonded in a way I've never seen—they're soul mates. At SXSW, I turned to watch them teasing each other in sign language.

You've said that casting an actress who is deaf for the part of the daughter—who is also deaf—was nonnegotiable.

KRASINSKI Yes, and not just because they'd add texture and depth but because I needed a guide. Millicent was so open and kind, and watching her and her mother gave me a lot of inspiration.

So! Now that this experience has been such a success, don't you want to work together again?

BLUNT Uh, *yeah*. We really, *really* do. It would have to be the right thing, but if he would direct me, I could pop in. I don't *have* to be the lead. [Laughs]

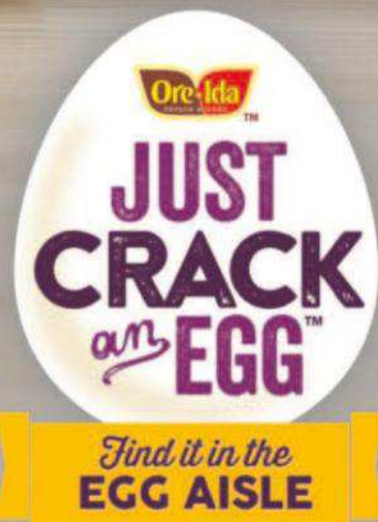
KRASINSKI It's definitely going to be hard to top this. ♦

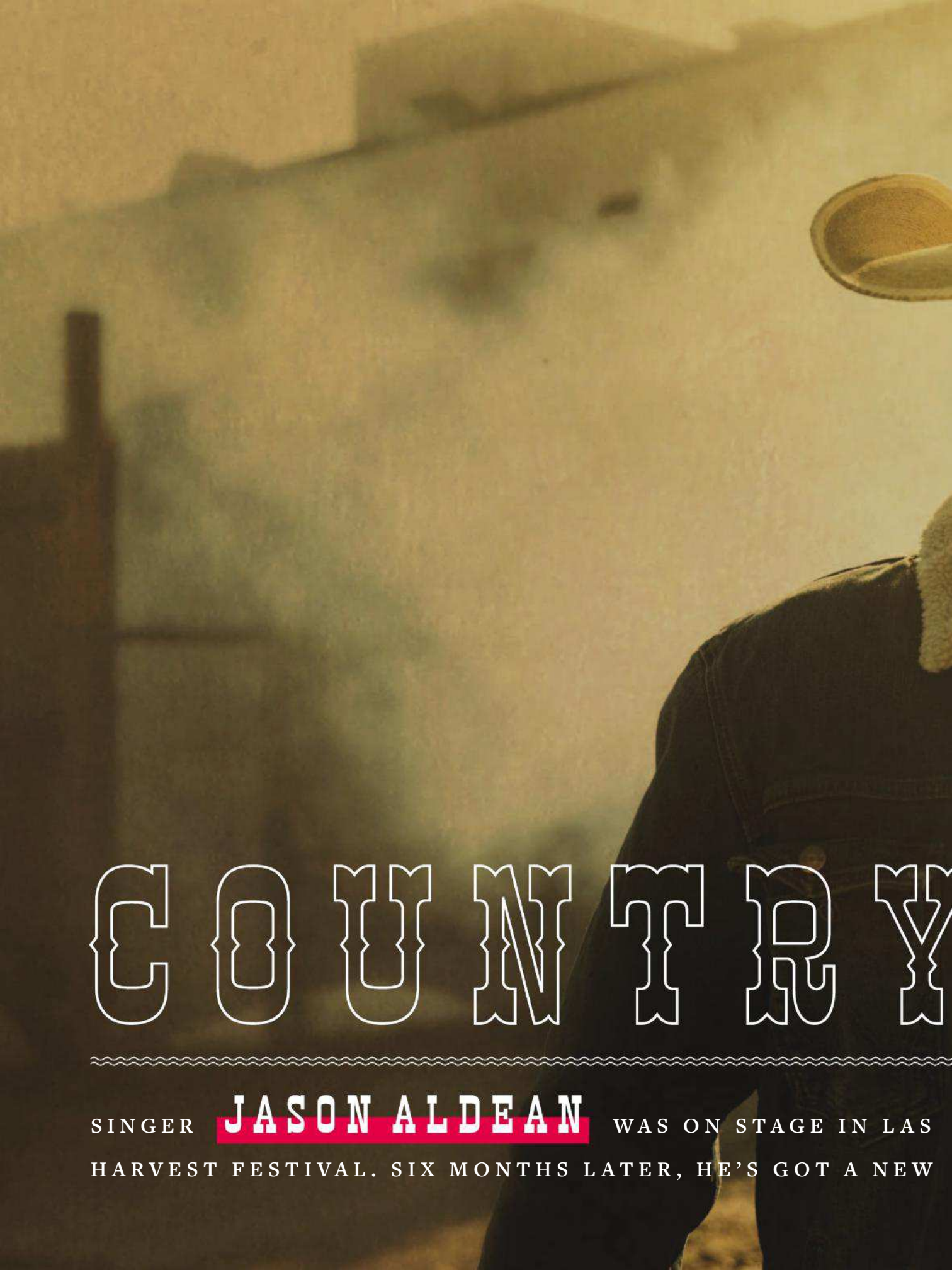
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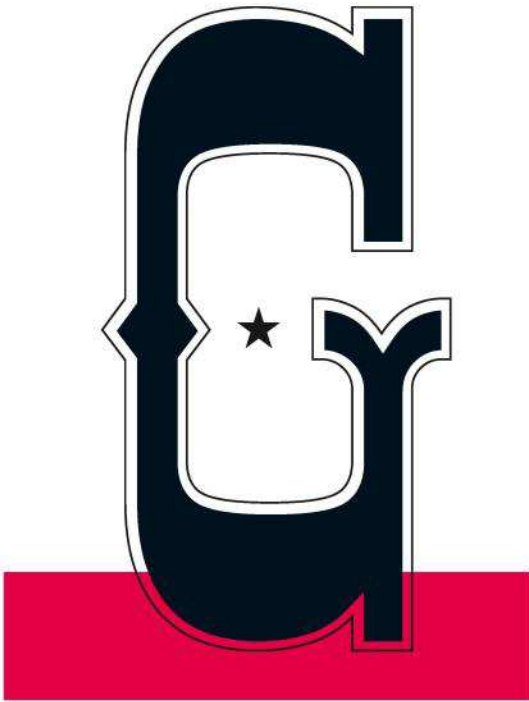
COUNTRY

SINGER **JASON ALDEAN** WAS ON STAGE IN LAS
HARVEST FESTIVAL. SIX MONTHS LATER, HE'S GOT A NEW

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a light-colored cowboy hat and a dark plaid shirt with a shearling collar, is shown in profile against a warm, hazy background. The overall tone is sepia or golden-yellow.

* STRONG

VEGAS WHEN THE SHOOTING STARTED AT THE ROUTE 91
ALBUM—AND PLENTY TO SAY. BY NOLAN FEENEY @NOLANFEENEY



GROWING UP IN A WORKING-CLASS FAMILY IN MACON, Ga., Jason Aldean could hardly afford tickets to see his favorite baseball team, the Atlanta Braves. Now the country singer is about to headline their home turf. On a near-freezing day at SunTrust Park this month, Aldean held a small press conference to detail his upcoming July 21 show. For a seasoned superstar who has 17 country airplay No. 1s to his name and is about to release his eighth album, *Rearview Town*, on April 13, playing large venues isn't new. But it's not every day you get to perform for roughly 40,000 people in what is essentially a hometown gig—or persuade Hootie & the Blowfish to reunite as your opening act. Looking out onto the empty field, Aldean, 41, called this concert, along with a 2013 performance at the University of Georgia stadium, his two “career-defining” shows.

Right now, however, there's a third career-defining show that's not so celebratory. On Oct. 1 last year, during Aldean's closing set at the Route 91 Harvest festival on the Las Vegas strip, a gunman opened fire on the crowd, killing 58 people and injuring more than 700 in the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history. Talking about that night is still hard for Aldean—when Vegas first comes up during a sit-down interview with EW later that day, he looks down at the table and pauses, his signature cowboy hat covering his face—and he's still figuring out what his role in the conversation about gun safety should be. “I never want people to feel like I'm exploiting that situation and trying to hawk my records,” he says, seated in a Braves' break room deep inside the stadium. Here, Aldean reflects on his groundbreaking career, returning to normalcy after Vegas, and how he broke out of a creative rut to make his new album.



You helped kick open the door for country artists to incorporate hard rock and hip-hop influences into their music. At times that made you a polarizing figure in the genre. Do you feel more understood now?

I think so. Early on, people were figuring out what we were, and in a lot of ways I was figuring it out too. We were just doing what we wanted to do: If it was a hip-hop song, okay. If it was a rock & roll song, okay. There were no rules. When we were putting out songs like [2010's] “Dirt Road Anthem,” there were a lot of people going, “What is *that* on the radio?” Now you hear guys talking fast and trying these little raps on songs. It's cool if people like what you're doing enough to want to emulate it. When you get into the music business, everyone asks you: “What makes you different? Why should I sign you?” You do those things that set you apart, and when everybody else starts doing them, you have to go, “Okay, I don't want to just keep up with the pack, what's our next move?” I like keeping people guessing. And that's where I feel like

I slipped a little bit on the last couple of records—I got a little too relaxed.

How did you fix that with this record?

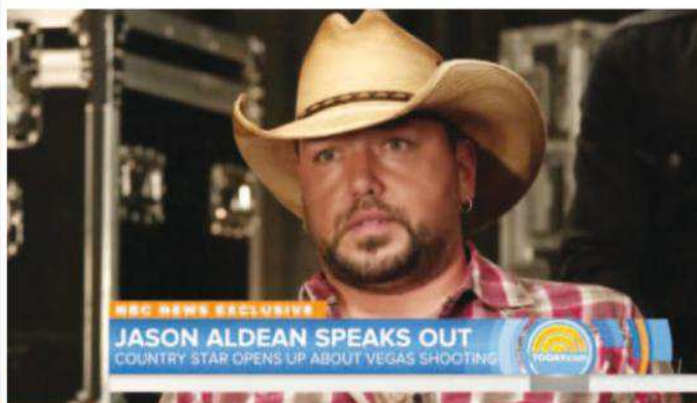
It wasn't so much about trying to change the sound. We got into this rut where we were cutting really good songs, but they weren't songs that had that extra *thing* about them. They were hit songs, but they weren't mega songs. I was more conscious of that on this record. Songs I probably would have cut on the last couple of records I didn't cut for this record.

What's one of the new songs you're proudest of?

“Rearview Town.” It's a dark, haunting song that just sounds badass. Part of the reason I named the album that was because it's a metaphor for putting all the bad s--- that weighs you down behind you and looking down the road to the better things ahead. Over the last five years or so, my professional and



Jason Aldean performing in Macon, Ga., in 2017; on the *Today* show in January



personal life has just been a roller coaster for me.

Do you consider Vegas a part of that?

To an extent. I don't know if you can lump that in with everything else. But that was a big one, and it took a toll, having to get back up and dust yourself off and play shows. I don't know if we were ready to do that. We wanted to, but it was a matter of, "Will my legs let me walk up there and do this tonight?"

You gave a short but impassioned speech at your first concert back in Tulsa that month: "People are gonna continue to try to...make us live in fear and be scared. And to those people, I say, 'F--- you.'" Did you feel an obligation to say something?

Yeah. You could've heard a damn pin drop in that arena, which is not normal. It was quiet as a damn church. I wanted to let people know that by playing, we weren't trying to be disrespectful. It was important for us to get back to normalcy: I did *SNL*, and then I went back to Vegas and

visited people in the hospital, but mostly I went underground and didn't really want to talk about it or deal with it. I felt like it wasn't appropriate for me to have my face on every news channel.

But now Vegas is probably going to come up in every interview you do, even though your record was mostly done last fall and doesn't touch on it. How are you dealing with that kind of attention?

I'll be honest with you, man, it's not something I enjoy talking about. It's not something I choose to keep reliving over and over. I'm just hoping that on this album cycle, we talk about whatever people want to know so we can go, "Okay, there's nothing left to say, let's focus on whatever we do next from here on out."

Country music has long been associated with conservative politics, but in the wake of the Vegas shooting, some country musicians reconsidered their views and called for stricter gun control. I noticed, though, that in statements and interviews

you gave after the shooting, you de-emphasized politics, saying that finding a solution shouldn't be a matter of Republicans versus Democrats; it should be everyone united against hate.

I'm not a politician. I'm not trying to push my own agenda. If I say that I believe this, I'm gonna piss off half of the people, and if I say I believe that, I'm gonna piss off the other half. I have my opinions, but what the hell do I know? I think everybody needs to sit down, stop pushing their own agendas, and figure out what will make it safer. When people can't go to a damn movie or a concert and not worry about somebody shooting the place up, there's a flaw in the system.

It must be hard to navigate what to do with your platform. You only signed up to be an entertainer, but now you're facing this pressure to be a spokesperson on an issue.

People make the case that I should stand up for [a particular policy change]. It's not my place. I have my theories on what I think could help, but I'm not a pro. I think part of the issue is kids at home playing virtual reality games where they're shooting people all day. They sit down for hours and hours, and that starts to become actual reality. Get out and throw a ball, you know what I'm saying? I think that's part of the problem, but I don't know.

Let's end this interview on a lighter note: How has your relationship with your older material changed over the years?

If you go back and listen to the songs I was cutting on my first two albums, I would never cut those songs now. I hadn't lived enough to know what the hell I was singing about. As an artist, you get older and start being drawn to songs that are more age-appropriate, songs that you can relate to more. I just turned 41, so I still feel like I got a long way to go before I'm an old man. Maybe I'll still be rapping at 50. I ain't much of a damn rapper anyway. I just play one on the record here and there.

I think you can see that growth you're talking about on a new song like "Better at Being Who I Am." When you sing lines like, "Your world and mine are worlds apart/This 'square peg, round hole' thing's too hard... I'm better at being who I am," that sounds like a later-in-life realization you don't have at 20. It's probably the most well-written song I've ever recorded. A lot of times you mold yourself into being something that you think somebody else wants in order to please them. You're never going to be happy doing that. You have to be yourself and do your own thing, because if you're not happy, it ain't ever gonna happen with anybody else. There's nothing special about that song, there's no bells and whistles on it. Just a great lyric, a great melody—honest and to the point.



THE *Angels*

Lee Pace,
Nathan Lane,
Denise Gough,
James McArdle,
and Andrew
Garfield photo-
graphed on
Feb. 26, 2018,
in New York City



After a sold-out
run at London's
National Theatre,

Angels in America—

Tony Kushner's
epic about love in
the time of AIDS—
opens on Broadway
March 25. The cast,
which includes
Nathan Lane and
Andrew Garfield,
talks about
performing the
masterwork
25 years after its
New York debut.

BY **Carla Sosenko**
@CARLASOSENKO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Alexei Hay

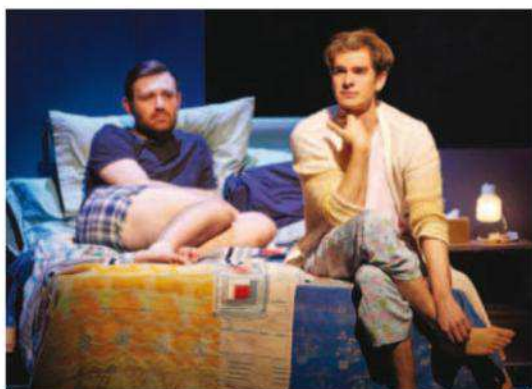
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
Kate Copeland



HAVE *Landed*



AS YOU COULD GUESS BY ITS SUBTITLE, “A GAY Fantasia on National Themes,” *Angels in America* is hard to describe. At its most basic level, Tony Kushner’s Tony- and Pulitzer-winning magnum opus is about two couples at a crossroads: Prior and Louis, who fall apart once Prior reveals that he has AIDS; and Harper and Joe, Mormons who’ve just moved to Brooklyn (she’s an agoraphobic Valium addict; he’s a closeted legal clerk). At the center of their overlapping stories—or, really, to the side, underneath, on top, insidiously—is Roy Cohn, Kushner’s reimagining of the real-life lawyer, he of Red and Lavender Scare infamy. First mounted in San Francisco in 1991 before opening on Broadway in 1993, the nearly eight-hour play in two parts (*Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika*) was Kushner’s response to an administration, Reagan’s, that looked the other way—or worse, laughed—as thousands of gay men died of AIDS. More than 20 years later, in the hands of director Marianne Elliott (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*), *Angels* is still as particular to the time and place in which it’s set as it is universal, as punishing as it is life-affirming. Perhaps most important for this production and its players, *Angels* is about right here and now, wherever you happen to be.



James McArdle and Andrew Garfield

What is it like to perform in a play that’s so timely?

ANDREW GARFIELD (*Prior Walter*) It doesn’t get any better. To feel purposeful as an actor is a rare thing—to find a story that is so in tune with the cultural moment, what the universe and the world seem to be crying out for, what humanity and the culture seem to be crying out for.... It feels like we’re on a march every night for seven and a half hours.

NATHAN LANE (*Roy Cohn*) He’s like Oprah.... People are bringing their sick children to be healed by Andrew. It’s unbelievable. Not even Tony Kushner is this eloquent about this play.

How do you feel about being asked to comment on politics because of this play?

LANE Whatever people see in the resonance of the play in 2018—and I think they’ll find how prescient Tony Kushner was—the play speaks even louder than it did maybe the first time. Obviously it’s all about the relationships, the human relationships.

DENISE GOUGH (*Harper Pitt*) You get opportunities so rarely to make your work a political statement. When we first started rehearsals [for the 2017 London run], it was a couple of days after Trump had been elected, and I thought going into work, “Thank God I’m rehearsing this and not something that means absolutely nothing,” which often we have to do to pay the rent.

LEE PACE (*Joe Pitt*) Tony’s intention was political when he made this play, and that was 25 years ago. It’s a play about change: the power of change and how difficult change is. And you look over the past 25 years and see how much has changed and how much plays like this contributed to that change. Now people live with AIDS.

GOUGH They’re not dying secret deaths.

JAMES MCARDLE (*Louis Ironson*) The heat of the play is different as well. When the play was first done 25 years ago, people were

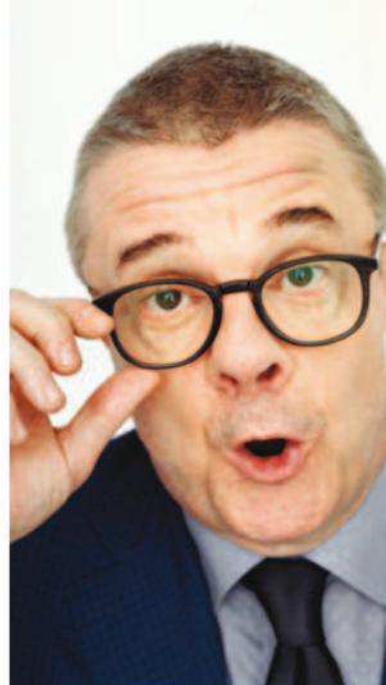
dying in the audience. So the immediacy of the play was about the crisis of AIDS. But now the heat is political.

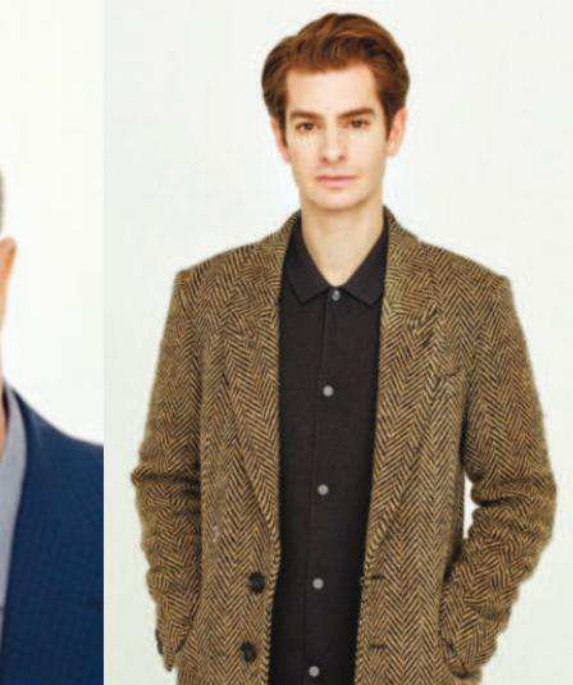
GARFIELD And ethical.

MCARDLE [Audiences] want something to articulate for them in a deep, profound way what it is that we’re all feeling that isn’t Twitter, that isn’t reductive. And seven and a half hours isn’t reductive.

Let’s talk about all those hours: Is this the hardest thing you’ve done as actors?

GARFIELD We all have different





“
*People will find
 how prescient*
TONY KUSHNER
*was—the play
 speaks even
 louder than it
 did maybe the
 first time.*
 ”

—Nathan Lane

experiences on a two-show day. Joe ends the play in such a different place than Louis ends the play. Prior has seven and a half hours of abject terror, and then about five minutes of light, self-acceptance, and acceptance of reality and joy; and a kind of gratitude for every breath he's got left.... I get sent back into the world in a very uplifted way.

LANE The exciting thing is, for me, to do the whole megillah, to do part 1 and then part 2; it's the most thrilling, exhilarating one. It's tiring, but you feel...

GOUGH ...completion.

LANE Yes, a completion. And it's really fulfilling. But each person goes through a different thing. My show in *Millennium* is sort of well structured, so there are a lot of breaks—because [Roy Cohn is] so evil, he's used sparingly. And then in *Perestroika* he's in the hospital dying, so that's the more exhausting and emotional one.... You have to figure out when to eat beforehand, because if you don't eat at the right time—like in the middle of the show on Saturday night, I was light-headed. I was like Judy Garland. “Where am I?”

Great art doesn't have to do anything but be great art, but if *Angels* could do anything, if it could give something to people, what would it be?

LANE Hope. Ultimately we're all going through our own personal tortures, and now also the political environment is atrocious—and yet we have each other. We can rely on each other. And we can listen and talk to each other if we really want to, and that's the only way we can, as the play says, move forward. And I think that ultimately that's what it tells you. It tells you

many things politically and emotionally and intellectually, but I think that's ultimately what it's reaching for.

McCARDLE Change is possible both politically and personally, but you have to be prepared to work hard for change. It's not going to come to you; you have to go out after it, violently, to attain it.

GARFIELD Tony says that he doesn't think any play can change the world or save humanity or save us from ourselves, but he obviously believes it's about direct action. What are we doing politically, individually, what are we doing to create the world that we want, that we can dream? And I think if anything... this play may send people back into their lives with more hope and more inspiration to make the changes they need to make in their own lives internally and therefore externally in the world.

PACE It's my sincere hope that a lot of people come to see this play that don't know it. I remember when I first was exposed to it, I was in high school in the suburbs of Houston, Texas, and I read it and I was like, “Oh my God, there's all of this out in the world. There's all of these other people that I think I know something about.” So it's my sincere wish that other people have that introduction to the play that I had.

GOUGH A man that came and helped us with research made a list of all his close friends who had died of AIDS, and he stopped at 37. He said, “I couldn't do it anymore.” And when he came to see the show, you could just see it in him, this emotional thing: that he was around at the time when you weren't allowed to talk about it publicly, and now he's able to watch it on a big, huge stage. These stories need to be on the most public stages we can put them on, so for us to be allowed to be part of that is incredible.

Angels in America is at the Neil Simon Theatre through July 1

Movies

Edited By | KATIE HASTY @KATIEHASTY



WHY WES ANDERSON WENT TO JAPAN

The stop-motion-animated feature **Isle of Dogs** may contain some of the filmmaker's most trenchant idiosyncrasies, but in his interview with EW, the director of *The Royal Tenenbaums* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* says that Japanese film and art set him off to a whole new underdog world. **BY PIYA SINHA-ROY**

WELCOME TO THE ISLE OF DOGS, ANOTHER adventure from the detail-oriented mind of Wes Anderson, where scrappy, diseased canines are exiled to a faraway island by order of a menacing politician. Mayor Kobayashi of Megasaki City commits election fraud, eliminates his opponents, and schemes to exterminate all dogs to meet his controlling ends. If the plot sounds like an allegory of real-life politics on immigration, it's because, as Anderson explains, real-life issues infiltrated the conception of his film.

"The world changed quickly and harshly," says the filmmaker, who spoke to EW on the phone from his adoptive hometown of Paris. "We kept seeing our movie on the front pages of newspapers—not just in America but all over the place."

In the fictional Japanese city of Megasaki, 20 years in the future, Kobayashi has banned the snout-fever-ridden dog population to the aptly named Trash Island. The mayor's lonely 12-year-old ward, Atari (Koyu Rankin), crashes a small plane onto Trash Island and searches for his beloved mutt Spots, aided by a ragtag pack of dogs.

Crafting stop-motion animation comes down to the minute details, Anderson says. More than 2,200 puppets and 250 sets were built in different scales for *Isle of Dogs*. Production designers Adam Stockhausen and Paul Harrod said the film's aesthetic is the 1963 vision of a futuristic Japan, drawing from the urban architecture, advertising, and graphic design of 1960s Japan as well as old Japanese woodblock prints and tapestries.

Mayor Kobayashi's Brick Mansion was modeled after Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel in Tokyo; real 1950s sake bottle labels were re-created from scratch for Trash Island's bottle cave; a sushi-preparation scene took months of trial and error to get just right. "It was not really entertaining when it didn't have enough authenticity," Anderson says of the latter set piece. "When it didn't reflect enough of the proper way to handle a knife and the proper way to handle the fish, it just became silly."

REEL NEWS

- **Wakanda Forever!** *Black Panther* has become the first film since 2009's *Avatar* to top the box office for five consecutive weeks.
- **Sweetest Sour** Though Selma Blair voiced interest, *The Sweetest Thing* writer says "no discussions" exist for a sequel.

CERTIFIED WES ANDERSON CHECKLIST

Exploring
the unique *Isle of
Dogs* will feature
at least some
familiar terrain



**BILL
MURRAY**



**HANDWRITTEN
NOTES**



**MAPS AND
DIAGRAMS**



**SYMMETRICAL
BUILDINGS**

The inspiration for the film came not from Japan but from London, where Anderson was filming 2009's *Fantastic Mr. Fox*: He saw signs for the Isle of Dogs, a small urban borough that juts into the River Thames, and it stuck with him. Developing the story with Jason Schwartzman, Kunichi Nomura, and Roman Coppola, Anderson transported *Isle of Dogs* to Japan in a tale influenced by the films of Hayao Miyazaki and Akira Kurosawa.

"The movie is a fantasy, and I would never suggest that this is an accurate depiction of any particular Japan," Anderson says. "This is definitely a reimagining of Japan through my experience of Japanese cinema."

Anderson tends to center his films—from 1998's *Rushmore* to 2014's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*—on endearing outsiders. In *Isle of Dogs*, he translates his affinity for underdogs into, literally, underdogs. Alongside the orphaned Atari, there's the gruff stray, Chief (Bryan Cranston), who chews off another dog's ear and is the sometimes leader of a pack of former house pets: Boss (Bill Murray), Duke (Jeff Goldblum), Rex (Edward Norton), and King (Bob Balaban).

There's a note at the start of *Isle of Dogs* explaining that all human characters speak in their native languages, which are sometimes translated by subtitles or organically through the script, and that dog barks are translated into English. But much of the Japanese dialogue, especially Atari's, is left untranslated. "I don't like to watch Japanese movies that are dubbed into English. I like the performances of actors in Japanese. It's interesting to me, and it's a very beautiful, complex language," Anderson says.

While Anderson has never explored a story set in Japan before, once again he delivers certain trademarks of his filmmaking, weaving tales within a tale of his oddball heroes. He lightly protests having signature traits, saying that each time he starts a new film, he erases any connections to his previous work. But he also admits that he ends up falling to his "preferred way" of telling the story.

"I think I've definitely reached the point where I accept that this is sort of who I am," Anderson says, laughing.

Isle of Dogs

STARRING Bryan Cranston, Koyu Rankin, Greta Gerwig

DIRECTED BY Wes Anderson | **RATING** PG-13

LENGTH 1 hr., 41 mins.

REVIEW BY Leah Greenblatt @Leahbats

A CERTAIN BRAND OF CINEMATIC whimsy—wry, goldenrod-tinted, fastidiously retro—is to Wes Anderson as spots are to a Dalmatian, innate and unmistakable. But with *Isle*, his second foray into stop-motion animation after 2009's *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, the auteur proves that even the drollest dog can learn new tricks, plumbing fresh depths of feeling and tenderhearted eccentricity.

After a brief prologue set "before the age of obedience," the story jumps to the fictional future Japanese metropolis of Megasaki City, where man's best friend has suddenly become *canis non grata*. Under the pretext of public health, the city's granite-jawed, cat-stroking Mayor Kobayashi (voiced by co-writer Kunichi Nomura) banishes all dogs to Trash Island, a desolate atoll where coddled house pets (Bill Murray, Edward Norton, Jeff Goldblum) and purebreds (Scarlett Johansson's silk-eared siren Nutmeg) mingle in equal misery with scrappy mutts like the grizzled, ornery Chief (Bryan Cranston). But when the mayor's 12-year-old nephew and ward, Atari (Koyu Rankin), crash-lands a stolen biplane on the island in search of his own unjustly exiled hound, the ragged pack begins to hold out hope of real rescue. (An early note informs viewers that the people will be heard mostly in their original Japanese, while the animals' barks are translated directly into English.)

Nearly all of Anderson's signatures are here: the visual wit, the vintage soundtrack, the wise narrator (Courtney B. Vance), the illustrious weirdos (Murray, Norton, Tilda Swinton). His darker allegory of persecution and internment isn't hard to miss, though, and the dogs themselves, with their tactile tufts of fur and Buster Keaton eyes, have an endearing, complicated humanity. In these cotton-wooled times, *Isle* may be deemed too bleak for children. But its bittersweet singularity speaks to every creature, big and small. **A-**



↑ Bill Murray (voice)

SXSW RECAP

South by Standouts

Crowd-pleasing studio premieres dominated the schedule at Austin's South by Southwest film fest (March 9–17), but debuts—particularly those from women—proved to be beyond SXSWorthy. **BY KATIE HASTY**



← (From left)
A Vigilante;
Prospect

THIS YEAR, THE BIGGEST films premiering out of South by Southwest were studio titles that audiences needn't wait long to see outside the fest. *Blockers* (April 6), *A Quiet Place* (April 6), and *Ready Player One* (March 29) all made their bow in Austin, the great taco oasis. No film pitted against a Steven Spielberg love letter in the same time slot is in an enviable position, but as SXSW film head Janet Pierson told EW, film lovers should take chances—margarita in hand—when they crack open the schedule.

Thunder Road and *Prospect*, two full-length features spun off from short films that premiered at SXSW in previous years, made big impacts this year: *Thunder Road* fetched the award for best narrative

feature; and *Prospect*, an inventive sci-fi with Pedro Pascal, Sophie Thatcher, and Jay Duplass, offers interplanetary travel that's less like stunning VR and more like if the G train ran through *Annihilation*. Duplass also stars in Lynn Shelton's meditative *Outside In*, while his brother Mark co-wrote the Suzi Yoonessi-directed *Unlovable* with Sarah Adina Smith and its lovable star, Charlene deGuzman.

Many other women directors and female-fronted films made for strong premieres, especially in the competitive categories. *A Vigilante*, helmed by Sarah Daggar-Nickson, sets Sadie (Olivia Wilde) on the hunt for her abusive ex-husband as she tracks down and punishes other domestic abusers for their

sins. Another hero tale, *Fast Color* (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), had many attendees calling it a solo story for the X-Men's Storm. Slow-burning *SADIE* is led by Sophia Mitri Schloss and Melanie Lynskey, who is great in pretty much everything she does. And in an impressive first feature for Olivia Newman with a production that was 60 percent female, *First Match* is about a girl who joins an all-boys wrestling team.

SXSW films that debuted at other fests but continued to make waves include *Sorry to Bother You* (see our Sundance recap); *Won't You Be My Neighbor*, Oscar-winning director Morgan Neville's doc on Mr. Rogers; Bo Burnham's gutting *Eighth Grade*; and the actually gutting *Hereditary*, with Toni Colette and Alex Wolff in a perfect tangle of fear. Another standout mid-nighter was *Ghost Stories*, the play adaptation with Martin Freeman, overflowing with classic scares. And Blumhouse Productions rolled in with two disturbing sights, with *Unfriended: Dark Web* and *Upgrade*. Too scared? Laugh it up and keep supporting women... by seeing *Support the Girls*.



CANNON HAS A BALL

Kay Cannon's parenthood and prom-night comedy *Blockers*, starring Leslie Mann and John Cena, explores young womanhood, coming out, growing up, and consent. But also butt chugging and puking. Lots of puking. **BY KATIE HASTY**

Why does John Cena's brand of comedy jibe with you?

He is so accessible to everyone, which is what makes him such a successful wrestler and human being. I think a lot of dads see themselves in him. John's an athlete, for sure, but in the wrestling world, they're performers. They understand timing, and there's acting involved that you won't see in, like, a basketball player.

Why is it important to tout that this is a woman-directed rated R comedy?

When you talk about representation and you can list on about one hand the number of women directing in this arena, that's why you shout about it. It's so people making decisions will seek out women, just as I was sought out for this. Hopefully *Blockers* will do good business, and if it does good business, it will make people less afraid to make the choice.

Were there any bits you knew you wanted in the movie, like, well, penis and balls?

This is gonna sound crazy, but I wanted to show male genitalia and not female genitalia. There is a full-frontal thing, and that was all Gary Cole's [idea]. But I have to really look at myself when I say: I have a real thing about girls drinking in movies. I'd be in the hospital if I drank that much. At dances with inexperienced drinkers, there's a lot of puking. I came up with a puke sequence in this, and in *Pitch Perfect*. Do I just like puking on screen? Because a lot of people don't.

→
Kay Cannon



MAX IRONS

WILLIAM HURT

LEEM LUBANY

MIRA SORVINO

BRENDAN FRASER

AN AT&T ORIGINAL

CONDOR

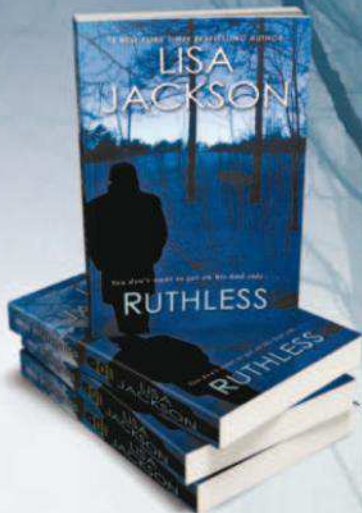
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PREMIERES
JUNE 6
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These **THRILLERS** Will *Chill* You to the **Bone...**



Beneath the most idyllic surface
can be **dangerous secrets,**
bitter jealousy, and those
who'll stop at nothing to
get their vengeance...



Meet a bone collector,
his macabre obsession,
and his museum of medical
oddities...in **a thriller that**
will haunt your dreams.

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE BOOKS ARE SOLD

Pacific Rim Uprising

STARRING
John Boyega,
Scott Eastwood

DIRECTED BY
Steven S. DeKnight

RATING PG-13

LENGTH 1 hr., 51 mins.

REVIEW BY
Chris Nashawaty
[@ChrisNashawaty](#)

↓ John Boyega



▶ IF YOU ENJOYED 2013'S *PACIFIC RIM* BUT SECRETLY WISHED IT WAS more like a vapid *Transformers* sequel, then you'll love *Pacific Rim Uprising*. Everyone else can give this heavy-metal howler a hard pass. Thanks to the freaky vision of Guillermo del Toro, the original's robots-vs.-sea-monsters battle royal at least had a blast of old-school *Godzilla* nostalgia. But the follow-up, directed by Steven S. DeKnight and produced by del Toro, is a flat cocktail of tedious mayhem, amateur-hour *Starship Troopers*-level acting (minus the tongue-in-cheek irony), and plot holes so gaping that a 20-story radioactive iguana could rampage right through them. John Boyega, playing the reluctant hero, is the sole reason to check it out—a year from now on late-night cable. **C-**

Unsane

STARRING Claire Foy, Joshua Leonard

DIRECTED BY Steven Soderbergh

RATING R | **LENGTH** 1 hr., 38 mins.

REVIEW BY Chris Nashawaty
[@ChrisNashawaty](#)

↓ Claire Foy



▶ JUST BECAUSE YOU can now shoot a film on an iPhone doesn't mean you should. Not only is Steven Soderbergh's Kafkaesque new thriller *Unsane* a lousy-looking film (cruddy lighting, mealy grain, fish-eye close-ups), its story is silly and thin. *The Crown*'s Claire Foy stars as Sawyer, a single cubicle drone who's been the victim of a stalker in the past. When she visits a shrink, she's committed to a psych ward against her will. Then her stalker turns up as an orderly. *Or does he?* Maybe it's all in our unreliable narrator's head. Soderbergh is after a *Cuckoo's Nest*-meets-*Shock Corridor* vibe here, but the film feels like it's missing a twist or two. You keep expecting it to zag, but it just keeps zigging. **C-**

NOW PLAYING

Your complete guide to films in theaters this week

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reviews, head to
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EW

EW

A- **ANNIHILATION** Directed by Alex Garland **W**
Starring Natalie Portman, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Gina Rodriguez

A- **BLACK PANTHER** Directed by Ryan Coogler **W**
Starring Chadwick Boseman, Michael B. Jordan, Lupita Nyong'o

B+ **7 DAYS IN ENTEBBE** Directed by José Padilha **W**
Starring Daniel Brühl, Rosamund Pike
José Padilha's film has a vibe of sweaty desperation, doom, and misplaced fanaticism. It's not a hopeful movie, but it is effective and undeniably thrilling.

B+ **GAME NIGHT** Directed by John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein **W**
Starring Jason Bateman, Rachel McAdams, Jesse Plemons

B+ **LOVE, SIMON** Directed by Greg Berlanti **W**
Starring Nick Robinson, Katherine Langford
The movie speaks to another, more precious kind of privilege, one that straight kids have had since movies began: the right to a romantic fantasy served up like ice cream, tart and sweet.

B+ **THOROUGHBREDS** Directed by Cory Finley **L**
Starring Anya Taylor-Joy, Olivia Cooke

B **THE DEATH OF STALIN** Directed by Armando Iannucci **L**
Starring Steve Buscemi, Simon Russell Beale, Jeffrey Tambor

B **TOMB RAIDER** Directed by Roar Uthaug **W**
Starring Alicia Vikander, Dominic West, Walton Goggins
The latest big-screen iteration of the blockbuster video-game isn't a film for the ages, but it's actually pretty good fun—an old-fashioned treasure-island adventure tale gilded in circa-2018 wokeness, anchored by an Oscar-winning actress far more gifted than the story requires.

C+ **THE LEISURE SEEKER** Directed by Paolo Virzi **L**
Starring Helen Mirren, Donald Sutherland

C+ **THE STRANGERS: PREY AT NIGHT** **W**
Directed by Johannes Roberts
Starring Christina Hendricks, Martin Henderson, Bailee Madison
It hasn't been long enough for the folks responsible for this sequel to come up with anything close to a fresh spin on the original movie's template.

C **DEATH WISH** Directed by Eli Roth **W**
Starring Bruce Willis, Vincent D'Onofrio, Elisabeth Shue

C **GRINGO** Directed by Nash Edgerton **W**
Starring David Oyelowo, Charlize Theron, Joel Edgerton

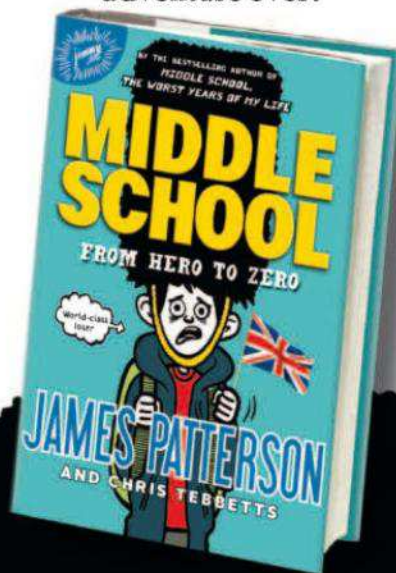
C **RED SPARROW** Directed by Francis Lawrence **W**
Starring Jennifer Lawrence, Joel Edgerton

C **A WRINKLE IN TIME** Directed by Ava DuVernay **W**
Starring Storm Reid, Oprah Winfrey, Reese Witherspoon, Mindy Kaling

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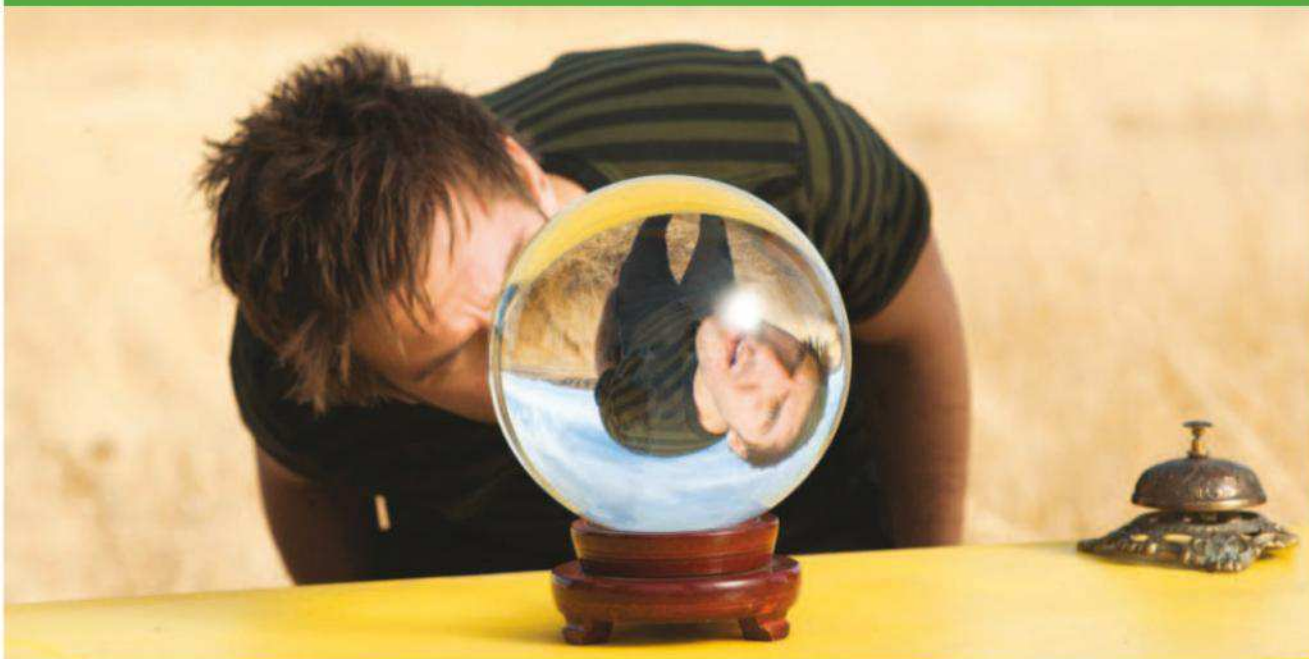


LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

KEY **L** > LIMITED RELEASE **W** > WIDE RELEASE

TV

Edited By | PATRICK GOMEZ @PATRICKGOMEZLA



↑ Dan Stevens is having a ball

Legion

DATE	TIME	NETWORK	REVIEW BY
Premieres April 3	10 p.m.	FX	Darren Franich @DarrenFranich



I TREASURE THE MADCAP VERVE OF *LEGION*, THE WAY every throwaway line of dialogue gets filmed like the climactic battle of an Infinity War. The FX series is a spin-off of the X-Men franchise, though it's more accurate to describe it as "What if the X-Men took all the drugs we're too lame to know about?" In the first season, powerful mutant David (Dan Stevens) struggled against a villainous telepath and a shady government agency. But what happened mattered less than how it all *felt*. And creator Noah Hawley blasts into season 2 with all the tricks his camera and editing software can manage. There are dissolves, split screens, wide-angle

lenses, fourth walls broken, and fifth walls exploded. A Don Draper-like voice narrates parables of madness. The astral planes have astral planes. "The colors, the colors!" I marked in my notes. And when the season premiere climaxed with a dance-fight, I wrote: "Like if the showdown from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* was a challenge on the finale of *America's Best Dance Crew*."

That's meant as a compliment, of course. This is eye-popping TV. But somewhere around the middle of last season, you started to feel like the exuberance was a distraction from what was essentially an overly familiar story about a misfit self-actualizing toward heroism. The finale dead-ended into a weirdly standard Hero Fights the Bad Guy superfight. The sheer

LOGLINES

- **Staying Revived!** NBC picked up the already-renewed *Will & Grace* for a third season.
- **Cinematic Dead** The season 8 finale of AMC's *The Walking Dead* and the season 4 premiere of *Fear the Walking Dead* will debut in more than 750 theaters Sunday, April 15.

energy was exciting, but that just meant it went nowhere faster.

In season 2, David returns from a mysterious absence. His beloved Syd (Rachel Keller) and the other mutants have allied with the mutant-hunting Division 3. They're after last year's baddie, the Shadow King—embodied in season 1 by Aubrey Plaza—who is currently inhabiting a body that looks like Jemaine Clement...but is mostly played by a swaggeringly cool Navid Negahban (*Homeland*'s Abu Nazir). The Shadow King is up to something that could destroy the world as we know it. But wait: There's another force at work that could also destroy the world as we know it. What's a world to do?

Lots of X-Men stories are about stopping the end of the world. *Legion*'s main contribution is dressing up an old tale in vintage-boutique clothes. Consider the new character Fukuyama, a Division 3 honcho. He wears a basket on his head and speaks through a group of androidal mustached women. It's kind of cool, but also paradoxically twee. See also: the high-water pants, the government cafeteria serving waffle boats, the feeling that every character's defining trait is whatever shirt they're wearing.

Between the music-video grandiosity, there are genuine humane charms. I love Bill Irwin and Amber Midthunder as Cary/Kerry, a double-person with an indefinable chemistry somewhere between squabbling siblinghood and true romance. The great Jean Smart is still around, though her matriarchal Melanie is in a windowless room on a drug binge (possibly a suggestion for the proper *Legion* viewing experience). Moment to color-blasted moment, this is the *most* show on television, but I don't really mean that as compliment. A little goes a long way, and on *Legion*, the opposite is also true. **B**

THIS YEAR ON LEGION

Cool facial hair, breakfast food, and more!



MUSTACHED WOMEN

Division 3's hench-ladies dress in black bodysuits that match their impressive pornstaches.



MINOTAUR

This strange mythic creature haunts one of the main character's minds. Maybe it's a metaphor!



ZHUANGZI

A philosopher who dreamed he was a butterfly, or vice versa. Has a cameo in the premiere, cuz this ain't *NCIS*.

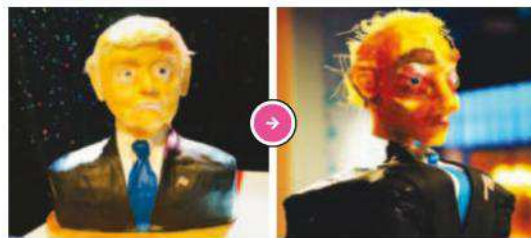


A WAFFLE BOAT

Like a sushi boat, but for waffles.

FANTASTIC FAILURES

Netflix's latest must-watch, ***Nailed It!***, highlights some incredible baking fails. (Though, if we're being honest, they're still better than we could do ourselves.)



THE DONALD TRUMP CAKE

"I'm putting politics aside.... I can't let who or what the cake is really distract me from this damn money," accessory designer Kymberli Talton says in hopes of beating out her two competitors for the \$10,000 prize. "Your cake will haunt my dreams," host Nicole Byer tells Kymberli of her failed attempt to re-create a cake modeled after Trump.



THE SHARK-ATTACK CAKE

"When retired cop Sal Venturelli drops the top three layers of his cake on the floor, he crassly decides his re-creation will be a 'shark with a disability.' What was supposed to be a cake covered in fondant, a surfer and surfboard made out of chocolate, and a buttercream 'wave' was deemed a 'Pac-Man shark' by Byer.



THE PRINCESS-TOWER CAKE

"This is too many things," search consultant Kevin Chase says when given two hours to replicate a castle cake that guest judge Zac Young says should include "rolling hills carefully crafted from rice cereal [and] a fondant Rapunzel." Head judge Jacques Torres calls Chase's cake a "Tower of Pisa." It isn't a compliment.

The Crossing

DATE Debuts April 2

TIME 10 p.m. | NETWORK ABC

REVIEW BY Kristen Baldwin @KristenGBaldwin

▶ **THE CROSSING** BEGINS WITH hundreds of bodies washing up on a rocky, picturesque stretch of Pacific Northwest coastline. The 47 people who arrive on dry land alive say they are from the future, fleeing the war-torn hell America will become thanks to the rise of a superpowered population known as Apex. As the feds swoop in to interrogate the refugees, local sheriff Jude Ellis (Steve Zahn) continues his own search for answers. The first hour of *The Crossing* is compelling, and Zahn does fine, subtle work as the even-keeled lawman at its center. But the pilot raises a lot of questions: What is the Apex agenda? How many of them are already here? Is every Apex superhuman evil, or are some, like Reece (Natalie Martinez)—who came through the migration with her daughter—trustworthy? Why did Jude have to leave his last job? (And why does he randomly have a Southern accent in one scene?) With only one episode available for review, for now *The Crossing* teeters on its own treacherous apex: It could be early-era *Lost*, or it could be *Flashforward*. (Fair warning: *The Crossing*'s co-creators Dan Dworkin and Jay Beattie were producers on both *The Event* and *Surface*.) My curiosity is sufficiently piqued, so I'll be tuning in for episode 2—prepared for disappointment, but hoping for something a little less predictable. **B**



↑ Steve Zahn, lawman

FIRST
LOOK



Lemony-Fresh Sets

Production designer Bo Welch offers a preview of season 2 of **A Series of Unfortunate Events** (out March 30 on Netflix). BY CHANCELLOR AGARD



ESMÉ SQUALOR'S APARTMENT

To convey the gaudy wealth of Esmé Squalor (Lucy Punch), the Baudelaire orphans' compulsively trend-obsessed new guardian, production designer Welch borrowed heavily from the art-deco period. "Art deco is one of those architectural or decorating choices that is really about style," says Welch. "There's no other reason for its existence. It's not born out of any other thing other than it's decorative."



CAFÉ SALMONELLA

Tacky was the goal of this unappetizingly named salmon-themed restaurant. "Every molecule of that set relates to salmon," says Welch, explaining that all of the furnishings, from the salmon chair-back covers to the wall-paper, were custom-made. "You take that idea—the idea of a themed restaurant—and just ratchet it up to its ridiculous extreme, and yet also present it as a real thing."



CALIGARI CARNIVAL

Constructed on a soundstage and boasting a functioning roller coaster, this run-down carnival is supposed to remind the audience of the miserable state of the Baudelaires' lives. "It just felt appropriate to me that as you approach the carnival, the dominant image is the rotting, falling-down roller coaster, but also that insane clown face, which is kind of ominous and yet still within the world of the carnival aesthetic," says Welch.

ROLE CALL



CARRIE-ANNE MOSS

The actress, 50, brings EW down the rabbit hole that led her to season 2 of *Marvel's Jessica Jones* (streaming now on Netflix). **BY SHIRLEY LI**

1

BAYWATCH

1994

When asked to revisit her guest appearance on the lifeguard drama as twins who—24-year-old spoiler alert!—turn out to be split personalities of the same woman, Moss just starts laughing. “Oh God, I think it was one [character] too many!” she chuckles before adding: “No, I’m just kidding. I remember really, *genuinely* going for it, and it was totally fun. Working on the beach in California? *I mean...*”

2

MODELS INC.

1994–95

As a fan of Aaron Spelling’s hit soaps, Moss had high hopes for this *Melrose Place* spin-off in which she played a veteran model, but the series lasted only one season—a setback she believes helped her afterward. “I learned from that show that the quicker you don’t have any expectations in Hollywood, the better,” Moss says. “In this business, there can be a lot of hype, and hype means nothing.”

3

THE MATRIX

1999

The Wachowskis’ bullet-timed sci-fi franchise catapulted Moss—who starred as hacker Trinity—into the limelight nearly two decades ago, but the actress says the film’s themes of resisting oppression and fighting for truth have never been more relevant. “I’ve realized how much of what the directors created is actually our reality right now,” she says.



“I’m still quoting *The Matrix* myself.” And that’s not a glitch.

4

MEMENTO

2001

Moss had just wrapped *The Matrix* when she came across the script for Christopher Nolan’s cerebral second feature and felt immediately drawn to Natalie, a cipher of a character who toys with Guy Pearce’s short-term amnesiac Leonard. “When I got to the scene where you see Natalie messing with him, I was like,

‘I have to play this,’” Moss says. “That was my favorite acting I’ve ever done.”

5

SNOW CAKE

2006

Pregnant at the time, Moss nearly passed on this indie drama about a reclusive British man until she learned of Alan Rickman’s involvement. “I just couldn’t say no,” she says, adding that working with the late actor was “heavenly.” “He was a lovely person, and...” She pauses. “It’s sad he’s not here.”

6

MARVEL’S JESSICA JONES

2015–Present

Season 2 of the comic-book series—in which she plays shrewd lawyer Jeri Hogarth—was entirely directed by women, a move that made Moss realize how few of them she’d worked with in her nearly three-decades-long career. “I can count how many on one hand,” she admits. “I knew of the imbalance, intellectually, but that’s when I became fully aware of it.” In other words, she saw the real world.



DRAGGING THE NEW QUEENS

1

YUHUA HAMASAKI

"I love lashes that look like crushed spiders, like she stomped a tarantula in a cheap shoe."

2

VANESSA VANJIE MATEO

"She looks like she's a handmaiden in *Mom and Dad Save the World*. This is *The Babysitter Who Also Saved the World*."

3

DUSTY RAY BOTTOMS

"This look can literally go to hell, and I never want to see it again in my life. I hate it. It doesn't tell any kind of story!"

4

MONÉT X CHANGE

"This is if she was in *The Help* and she quit her job that day and tore off that circle skirt and just strutted out."

5

THE VIXEN

"She didn't have a costume, so she stopped by a claw machine at an arcade and won a few things and put them on her body."

6

MONIQUE HEART

"I have an affinity toward beautiful hair, beautiful face, beautiful costumes, and then man arms. In drag that's the most fun thing!"

7

AQUARIA

"This is proof that wearing a belt as a bra works! It looks amazing, but you have to be 85 pounds to do it. She's giving masculine woman, which I think is really sexy."

8

MIZ CRACKER

"She looks beautiful. This blue is so right. New York queens are always going to pick something they can ride the train in."

9

BLAIR ST. CLAIR

"She's the one who's been in trouble with the police! She looks really good. You can barely see the ankle monitor."

10

EUREKA O'HARA

"This is Eureka drag to a T! It's pageant meets dance costume with stoned everything."

11

ASIA O'HARA

"This is my favorite look. White leather on her skin tone, it's amazing! I was screaming!"

12

KAMERON MICHAELS

"I love manly tattooed arms on a beautiful woman. I'm obsessed with it. I love mixed signals with gender!"

13

KALORIE KARB-DASHIAN WILLIAMS

"I like the boots, but let's call them what they are: denim fore-skin. Stepping into *Drag Race*, you should wear something really representative of yourself, and she sees herself as a cheap hooker in the winter."

14

MAYHEM MILLER

"This is obviously a Katya gown! High-neck, red velvet, Katya loves s--- like that. This also means Mayhem Miller could go crazy at any minute."



Freshly crowned *All Stars* champ **Trixie Mattel** reads the ladies' entrance looks for *RuPaul's Drag Race* season 10 (Thursdays at 8 p.m. on VH1). **BY JOEY NOLFI**



MATTEL: SANTIAGO FELIPE/GETTY IMAGES; RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE: VH1 (14); OH: © JAMES WHITE/CORBIS OUTLINE/BBC; KILLING EVE: BBC AMERICA



Sandra Oh: After Anatomy

Nearly four years after *Grey's*, the actress returns to TV in the spy thriller *Killing Eve* (debuting April 8 at 8 p.m. on BBC America). **BY NATALIE ABRAMS**

In *Killing Eve* you play an MI5 analyst who becomes infatuated with a female assassin named Villanelle (Jodie Comer). What drew you to the project most?

The very first thing was [showrunner] Phoebe Waller-Bridge's voice—I was familiar with *Fleabag*. Also, that they thought of me. I was very honored. And then the opportunity to play someone that is going into darkness was totally exciting. Eve's slightly bored in her work life and her relationship. We get the feeling that she wants more.

Do you like doing more action scenes?

It's exciting to be doing it as a woman in her 40s. Eve doesn't immediately turn into Jason Bourne. That's what I freaking love about it. Any action or peril, you'll see her do it as

a normal person would—so there's a lot of screaming and running. [Laughs]

We have to ask: Would you ever return to *Grey's Anatomy*?

I'm really pleased and grateful that the show is continuing on with its life, and the people who are still attached to the show are still attached to Cristina. It means a lot to me. It's hard to beat that ending, because it keeps

it open in so many ways, where you can continue having that relationship with Cristina. Clearly, for me as an artist, I am moving on, and I'm very happy and excited to be in another relationship, and I am so committed to this character and this show. The idea of stepping back into the Cristina shoes, it doesn't feel right to me right now. But honestly, who knows how long *Grey's* is gonna go?



↑ Jodie Comer and Sandra Oh get to the point on *Killing Eve*



Speak of the Devil!

According to the calendar—if not the forecast—spring has sprung! Grab your light sweater and some snacks, like these deviled eggs from *Fixer Upper*'s Joanna Gaines, and hit the park. **BY RUTH KINANE**

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup packed light-brown sugar (optional)
- ½ lb. bacon (optional)
- 12 large eggs
- 1 tbsp. distilled white vinegar
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp. dill pickle relish
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh dill, plus sprigs for garnish (optional)
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh chives, plus more for garnish (optional)
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tbsp. sweet paprika (optional)

1 If using the bacon, preheat the oven to 375°F and line a rimmed baking sheet with foil.

2 Spread brown sugar on a plate. Press both sides of each bacon slice in the brown sugar to coat; arrange bacon in a single layer on prepared baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven until crispy, 16 to 18 minutes. Transfer bacon to a wire rack and cool completely, about 30 minutes. Chop bacon.

3 Prepare a large bowl of ice water. Place the eggs in a single layer in

a large saucepan; cover with water by 2 inches and add vinegar. Bring the water to a boil over high; cover pan, and turn off heat. Let stand 10 minutes. Drain eggs and immediately transfer to prepared bowl of ice water. Let stand in ice water until completely cool, about 10 minutes.

4 Peel eggs; rinse and pat dry. Slice eggs in half lengthwise. Gently scoop out yolks into a large bowl; place whites on a serving platter. Add mayonnaise, relish, chopped dill, chopped chives, dry mustard, and salt to yolks. Mix well, mashing yolks with the back of a fork. Use

a spoon to gently fill egg whites with yolk mixture. Sprinkle generously with bacon, if using, and garnish with paprika, dill sprigs, and chives, if desired. Serve immediately or cover lightly and chill up to 24 hours before serving.

SERVES 12

Active Time 15 mins.
Total Time 45 mins.

Recipe adapted from *Magnolia Table* by Joanna Gaines, available April 24

"They're a simple and unique addition to a weekend gathering that can be made a day in advance," says Gaines.



PACK UP THE PARTY

Just because you're dining alfresco doesn't mean you have to sacrifice the chic elegance of the indoors. *Queer Eye*'s Bobby Berk shares his top tips to create some ambience under the trees and picnic like a pro. **BY RUTH KINANE**



MAKE IT COLORFUL

Locating the designated picnic spot in a sea of blankets can be tricky. "Bring balloons!" says Berk. "Tie them around the perimeter of your area so friends can find you."



MAKE IT COMFORTABLE

Since soggy bottoms are no fun, "buy an inexpensive rug with rubber on the bottom so grass dampness doesn't soak through," advises Berk. "They roll right up."



MAKE IT ECO-CONSCIOUS

"Opt for reusable plastic cups and plates that you can take to every picnic," suggests Berk. "Patterned paper straws are cute too, and they won't end up inside a fish's tummy."



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STYLE HUNTER

DENIM
SPECIAL

Blue Crush

We love the red carpet and all, but what we really want to know is how to get up in these jeans.

BY CLARISSA CRUZ AND MAUREEN LENKER



Love, Simon

NICK ROBINSON'S JACKET

Yes, men can wear fur, especially when it's in the form of the ruggedly chic faux-shearling jacket Robinson rocks in *Love, Simon*. Costume designer Eric Daman says he wanted to give Simon "a soft grunge vibe that echoed his love of music." After trying several vintage '70s jackets—rejected because they felt too hipstery—Daman found a winner from TopMan. "The jacket shows he has style in a subtle, nuanced way," says the designer, who adds that the cowboy-influenced style is a nod to *Brokeback Mountain*. Though the original jacket is no longer available, the brand has produced a similar version.



↑
TopMan Blue Borg
Denim Jacket, \$100;
us.topman.com



The Americans

HOLLY TAYLOR'S
STONEWASHED JEANS

Paige's normcore-before-there-was-normcore jeans signify her getting down to some serious spying in the show's final season. "We wanted to find something that showed the jump into adulthood and continuing in the family business, and the tomboy looks of the late '80s suited Holly well," says the show's costume designer Katie Irish. While Taylor is wearing vintage Guess jeans, you can find a look-alike pair at H&M.

← H&M Vintage High
Ankle Jeans, \$39.99; hm.com



Jessica Jones

KRYSTEN RITTER'S
DISTRESSED JEANS

Twitterers haven't been kind to Jessica's denim wardrobe thus far, calling her ubiquitous light-wash Citizens of Humanity jeans "musty ass," "nasty ass," and "mad sour." But we at Style Hunter are happy to report that Jessica will soon be sporting not one but *three* new pairs of jeans, starting halfway through season 2. "We introduced jeans from R13, [in] light blue, gray [left], and a darker wash," says the show's costume designer Elisabeth Vastola. "The cut of them is a little more modern—they hit in that sweet spot right over the hips, but don't feel like mom jeans."

← Similar styles available at
r13denim.com





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What to Watch

A day-to-day guide to notable programs*

By | CLARK COLLIS @CLARKCOLLIS



MUST
WATCH
OF THE
WEEK

Season Premiere

Roseanne

TUESDAY, MARCH 27 | 8-9PM | ABC

←
John
Goodman
and
Roseanne
Barr

When ABC first announced it was reviving its blue-collar comedy—which premiered way back in 1988—someone actually asked showrunner Bruce Helford who would be taking over the title role from Roseanne Barr. “It was hard for people to understand that the whole cast was coming back together,” Helford tells EW. “It’s a big thing that all of these people—Roseanne, John Goodman, Laurie Metcalf, Sara Gilbert, Sarah Chalke, Lecy Goranson, Michael Fishman—were available to do this in this particular moment. Everybody wanted to do it.” Speaking of timeliness, the Conner family’s story is more relevant than ever: Roseanne and her beloved Dan (Goodman) continue to squeak out an existence while living in their same Lanford, Ill., home with their now-single daughter Darlene (Gilbert) and her two children. “Roseanne and Dan have no health care. They can barely make a living,” says Helford, who sought help in the writers’ room by hiring Wanda Sykes, Whitney Cummings, and Norm Macdonald. “This family is very much at the core of what’s going on in the country right now.” —Lynette Rice

MONDAY MARCH 26



Series Debut

The Terror

9-11PM | AMC

Ice water runs red with British blood in this tense adaptation of Dan Simmons’ maritime horror novel. Ciarán Hinds and Jared Harris play 19th-century ship captains hunting for the elusive Northwest Passage in Arctic climes. And while their men freeze through endless winter, something hunts *them*. That something isn’t *The Thing*, but AMC’s well-acted series recalls John Carpenter’s snowy monster freak-out, though it’s less interested in creatures than the shifting power dynamics of desperate men. **B+**

—Darren Franich

TUESDAY MARCH 27



Series Debut

Splitting Up Together

9:30-10PM | ABC

Miserable marrieds Lena (Jenna Fischer) and Martin (Oliver Hudson) decide to split up but plan to keep living together because they can’t sell their house. Hudson uses his natural smug-face to good effect as the oblivious Martin, and Fischer’s inherent sweetness saves Lena—a micromanaging perfectionist—from becoming a standard sitcom harpy-wife. While it’s missing the weirdness of creator Emily Kapnek’s other comedies (*Suburgatory*, *Selfie*), a talented supporting cast (including *MADtv*’s Bobby Lee) helps inject the show with some quirk.

C+ —Kristen Baldwin

WEDNESDAY MARCH 28

Series Debut
Alex, Inc.

8:30-9PM | ABC

"I love playing a hapless good guy," says Zach Braff, sharing a description that apparently applies as nicely to his new sitcom character as it did to that of young physician J.D. on Braff's long-running *Scrubs*. Based on the podcast *StartUp*, the new show stars Braff as Alex Schuman, a married father of two who quits his successful radio job to launch a podcasting company. The series centers on his trials and family—including Alex's Indian-American lawyer wife, Rooni (Tiya Sircar)—as he stumbles through start-up life. Sums up Braff: "It's the new version of the American dream." —Piya Sinha-Roy



Season Premiere
The Americans

10-11PM | FX

The Cold War drama's last season heats up fast with a three-year time jump to 1987. Philip Jennings (Matthew Rhys) has retired to the travel agency, but wife Elizabeth (Keri Russell) gets involved in political intrigue with global ramifications. In some ways, the show can seem ridiculous—"save the world" plot mechanisms move the far-flung characters together with unconvincing speed—but it's a thrill to watch *The Americans* tee up its final act. The Jennings' marriage has never been closer to mutual assured destruction. **B+** —Darren Franich

THU MAR 29

Series Debut
Siren

8-10PM | FREEFORM

Has your appetite for human-fish relationship tales been whetted by *The Shape of Water*? Then dive into this show about a mysterious girl (Eline Powell) who turns up in a town known for its mermaid tales—and tails?



FRIDAY MARCH 30

Series Debut
The Dangerous Book for Boys

STREAMING | AMAZON

How do you turn a how-to book with no plot and no characters into a TV show? "I just couldn't come up with the answer," says Bryan Cranston, who co-created the small-screen version of *The Dangerous Book for Boys*. "One day I was going out for a run, and all of a sudden it pops into my head." The result? A saga about three brothers coming to terms with the death of their father through a book he left them, filled with life lessons to guide their journey to manhood. "There's no better time to have young boys learn how to become good men," says Cranston. Well, it's better than having them break bad. —Dana Schwartz



SAT MAR 31

Say Yes to
the Dress

8-9PM | TLC

This episode looks back at the celebrity clientele of wedding-dress expert Randy Fenoli, from Kristin Chenoweth to Tony Danza to—actually those two cover the waterfront adequately enough, I think.



SUNDAY APRIL 1



Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert

8-11PM | NBC

NBC's latest live musical is composer Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyricist Tim Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which rises on Easter Sunday. John Legend stars in the titular role, while Sara Bareilles is Mary Magdalene—and a devout believer in her costar's abilities. "John is so fearlessly walking into new territory," she says. Filmed with an interactive audience (and mosh pit!) on a multilevel stage, this adaptation should feel more like a rock concert than a musical. "The score is so badass, and the melodies are undeniable," says Bareilles. "I had goose bumps the entire first day.... The talent pool is off the charts." Amen. —Ruth Kinane

Music

Edited By | ALEX SUSKIND @ALEXSUSKIND

THE LONG REACH OF JACK WHITE



Rock's Renaissance man talks *Jeopardy!*, George Orwell, and his wild new album. **BY LEAH GREENBLATT**

You're famously sparse in the studio, but your new record, *Boarding House Reach*, feels almost maximalist, and so sonically diverse.

Oh yeah, for sure. It's sort of the fruits of me telling myself that I don't care if it's analog, digital, three drummers, one drummer, a drum machine—it doesn't matter to me, I just want this particular sound on this song.

Would you say you threw out your own rules?

Mmm-hmm, and what's good about making rules for yourself is you can bend them when you want to, you can break them. I think the misconception with me is that I'm telling all people, "This is how you should do it." I'm never saying that—never. I'm only talking about how it works for *me*. Someone else can make an entire career on Pro Tools and make something amazing.



DAVID JAMES SWANSON

NOTEWORTHY

- **Miss Movin' On** Fifth Harmony's remaining members are going on hiatus to pursue solo projects.
- **Let's Make This Last Forever** Blink-182 will kick off a Las Vegas residency at the Palms this May.

You also roped in some pretty great session guys—musicians who usually work with artists like JAY-Z, Beyoncé, Kanye.

I was trying to find a particular type of musician, which is one who can re-create on stage what's on a modern hip-hop or R&B record. So it became this cool thing where it was all strangers going right into the room, and we just started recording immediately. There's an amazing, bizarre energy you get when you do that.

Tell me about the album title.

There's a scene in [the 1942 movie] *Yankee Doodle Dandy* where they actually use this phrase "boardinghouse reach." The idea is you put the good food in a boardinghouse on the other side of the table from people who haven't paid their rent yet, so they have to reach to get it. [Laughs]

Some of the song titles are real vocab tests. How did you find words like "Abulia and Akrasia" and "Hypermisophoniac"?

That first one started with this singer C.W. Stoneking. I wrote a poem for him to recite, and the point was to find words that I wanted to hear him say, because I just love that dusty ghost of a voice that he has. It's sort of an anti-Orwellian thing, to keep these beautiful words alive that don't have a fighting chance otherwise, you know? Like in 1984, they're trying to eliminate words—"We don't say 'fantastic,' we say 'doubleplusgood.'"

You've said with this record you wanted to try to write like Michael Jackson did.

Yeah, that was from watching that documentary *This Is It*, which brought me to tears. It's just unbelievable how talented he was. When he was talking to his band he would say, "No, the bass line is like this: *d-d-d-duh, d-d-d-duh*," humming and beatboxing at the same time. He's not saying, "It's C-D-F sharp." So I thought, "Let me try to do that, where I go in and write the melodies first."

Did that come naturally to you?

No, it's very unnatural. [Laughs] Well, it's sort of like singing in the shower, whistle

while you work, finding that style that's inside you. So I had to teach myself that.

You collect so many things: taxidermy, rock memorabilia, comic books. You said you bought Elvis Presley's first single specifically so you could share it through your label, Third Man Records. Do you ever think of maybe starting a Third Man museum?

If we had the room for it that would be nice, because I think things are supposed to be shared. If you own a van Gogh painting only you and your friends get to see, that's tough to understand. To me it's also cathartic, rather than having stock in BP oil or something, to invest in the history of things to preserve them, you know? The best moments are when you can share it with other people, like we did with the Elvis acetate.

Are your son and daughter old enough now to give you feedback on your music?

Very much so, yeah. I've been asking them since they were 5, 6 years old. You know you have something when a kid really likes a song, because they don't lie. And they have great taste, it's really impressive. I'm 42 now, but it's funny, when I was a kid I didn't like *anything* anybody else liked, which was not good for me socially. I should have been sat down and talked to. "Take it easy, buddy." [Laughs] But early on I was so in love with music, I had so many opinions about what was beautiful and what was fake.

Is it true you'd like to direct?

Oh, for sure. That's the thing that music sort of keeps getting in the way of, because you really need a giant window. I've written scripts and made all these videos and commercials, but I really want to direct someone else's script first as a feature. I want it to be just right.

You were a visual clue on *Jeopardy!* recently—but then one of the contestants mistook you for Eminem.

Yeah, a bunch of people texted me, that was funny. Being on *Jeopardy!* is definitely some form of making it, I suppose. [Laughs]



CHLOE X HALLE

With golden voices, a sparkling debut, and the approval of Queen Bey, this teen duo from Atlanta are guaranteed to win hearts (and ears).

BY ERIC RENNER BROWN

BEYONCÉ WATCHES

YouTube just like the rest of us. In December 2013, a week after she released her self-titled masterpiece, sisters Chloe and Halle Bailey uploaded a cover of "Pretty Hurts"—and soon found themselves signed to Bey's Parkwood Entertainment label.

"We literally were flipping out, because as young girls, of course everyone looks up to Beyoncé," Halle, 17, says. Since the musically self-taught siblings began posting pop covers in 2011, they've racked up a formidable résumé: a performance for the Obama White House, a song in Ava DuVernay's *A Wrinkle in Time*, and an opening stint on Bey's Formation World Tour.

They've notched another major achievement with their debut album, *The Kids Are Alright*, a 16-song set of electro-infused R&B that they mostly wrote and produced themselves. "This generation, we're not afraid to speak up," Chloe, 19, says of the project's themes. "We got this: The kids will be alright."



The Top-Earning Tours of All Time

THIS YEAR JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE WILL TAKE his (man of the) woodsy bona fides on the road, Taylor Swift will flaunt her reputation on stage, and Kendrick Lamar will be the humble headliner for a Top Dawg Entertainment blowout tour. But will any of them approach these OG money-makers? BY ERIC RENNER BROWN



(From left) AC/DC, Roger Waters, Guns N' Roses, Coldplay, the Rolling Stones, and U2

\$441M \$459M \$475M* \$523M \$558M \$736M

AC/DC

BLACK ICE TOUR
2008–2010

The Aussies' Black Ice stint, in support of their first No. 1 album since 1981, was the final one to feature some of the lineup's core members. By 2017 guitarist Malcolm Young had died, singer Brian Johnson was sidelined with hearing trouble, drummer Phil Rudd was dealing with legal problems, and bassist Cliff Williams had quit the band.

ROGER WATERS

THE WALL TOUR
2010–2013

This three-year trek—the highest-grossing ever staged by a solo artist—featured high-concept, deeply political renditions of Pink Floyd's 1979 classic *The Wall*, complete with a hulking version of its titular barrier and Waters' iconic, enormous inflatable pig.

GUNS N' ROSES

NOT IN THIS
LIFETIME...TOUR
2016–present

Axl Rose, Slash, and Duff McKagan reunited for the first time since 1993 for this still-in-progress production. We're not sure what's more impressive: that a tour that doesn't wrap until July has already earned so much dough, or that Axl is finally showing up to gigs on time.

*As of 1/17/18

COLDPLAY

A HEAD FULL
OF DREAMS TOUR
2016–2017

The British rockers' massively successful Dreams run featured nightly tributes to Prince, David Bowie, and Tom Petty, and a social-media component that let attendees request songs.

THE ROLLING STONES

A BIGGER BANG TOUR
2005–2007

Immortalized in Martin Scorsese's 2008 documentary *Shine a Light*, this Stones trek famously had Arnold Schwarzenegger, then California's governor, charging donors \$100,000 each to join him in VIP when the tour stopped at Boston's Fenway Park.

U2

360° TOUR
2009–2011

The band's ambitious two-year run in support of 2009's *No Line on the Horizon* became the highest-grossing tour of all time and featured an epic, 15-story stage nicknamed the Claw that weighed 400 tons.

ANGUS YOUNG: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; ROGER WATERS: TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES; AXL ROSE: PETER STILL/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES; CHRIS MARTINI: FRANCESCO CASALDO/MONDO/DOOR PORTFOLIO/GETTY IMAGES; MICK JAGGER: KARA RIVAS/ANP/GETTY IMAGES; BONO: JOHN PANKA/RETNA

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HENDRIX'S FINAL TRIP

A new collection, *Both Sides of the Sky*, exhumes studio work that Jimi Hendrix recorded before his death in 1970 at age 27. Longtime engineer **Eddie Kramer** and Hendrix's sister **Janie** walk EW through the highlights.

BY ERIC RENNER BROWN

A WHO'S WHO OF MUSICAL TALENT

With contributions from Stephen Stills, Johnny Winter, Lonnie Youngblood, and more, *Both Sides of the Sky* reflects Hendrix's "ringmaster" role in New York's late-'60s music scene. "He was the magnet that drew everybody to him," Kramer says. "Jimi had his special friends that he wanted to jam with, and that's how the music was created."

A RETURN TO HIS SIDEMAN ROOTS

Hendrix started his career as a hired gun on the chitlin circuit for artists like the Isley Brothers and Little Richard. On *Both Sides*, he plays backup on lead vocals from Youngblood and Stills. "He played well with others," notes Janie, CEO of Experience Hendrix. "It takes a lot for someone that is a star in their own right to be in a humbling position."

HENDRIX CONTINUED TO PUSH SONIC BOUNDARIES

Invigorated by the rhythm team of bassist Billy Cox and drummer Buddy Miles, Hendrix delves into funk, blues, and R&B. "This was a transitional time for Jimi," Kramer says. "The year of '69...is this year of change and Jimi searching for this new musical direction." Adds Janie: "People didn't get to see what he really did have planned. Jimi kept saying, 'I'm working on a new sound, you'll see.' He was trying to do something bigger."

YOU'LL HEAR "WOODSTOCK" LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Months before Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young released their

iconic take on the Joni Mitchell cut, Hendrix recorded it himself. Kramer recalls a spirited Stills bursting into the control room of Manhattan's Record Plant studios with the tune and Hendrix immediately agreeing to play bass. "It's remarkable how similar the tone and the direction of where the guitars are going [is]," Kramer says of the two versions. "Obviously, Jimi had quite a bit of an influence."

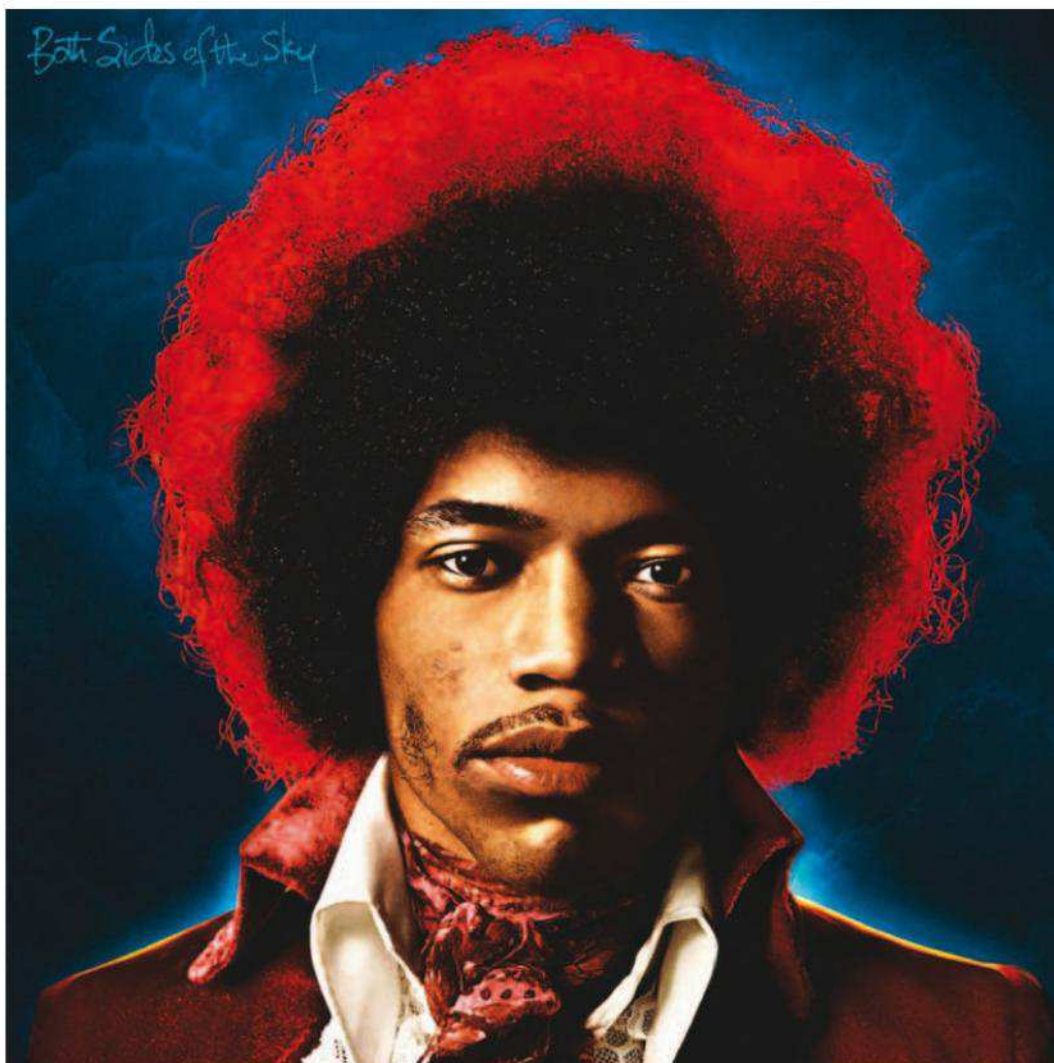
YES, THAT'S A SITAR

"He didn't use the electric sitar very much, but when he did, it was absolutely spectacu-

lar," says Kramer. *Both Sides of the Sky* ends with the far-out seven-minute jam "Cherokee Mist," which Kramer describes as "visceral...[with an] American Indian feel" and feedback that "sounds like a trapped animal."

HENDRIX'S FUNNY SIDE SHINES THROUGH

Even at 27, Hendrix was still "just a kid," says Janie. "There was a very playful side to him," she adds, citing silly flourishes like his allusion to the *Batman* theme on "Lover Man." "I'm glad that it comes out in this album," Kramer agrees, stating that Jimi had an "acerbic, pointed, winds-you-up kind of humor. He'd take the piss out of all of us."



HENDRIX: MIKE BERNOSKY; BAILEY: MATT SAYLES/INVISION/AP/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; CHLOE: VARIETY/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



In schools to break barriers.

A parent loses a job. A family loses a home. These are just some of the hardships Alina was coping with when she started at her new school. Jamall from Communities In Schools helped her settle in and map out a path to graduation. Along with his support, Alina's "no excuses" attitude has earned her a scholarship to her dream college. There are millions of at-risk kids like Alina who need help breaking barriers to stay in school and succeed in life.

See how we help all kids succeed. | **CommunitiesInSchools.org**



Books

Edited By | CLARISSA CRUZ @CLARISSANYC1

THIS GIRL IS ON FIRE

She's been anointed by Reese, is a celebrated force on Twitter, and both of her books are being adapted for the screen. How **Celeste Ng** became a thoroughly modern novelist. **BY DAVID CANFIELD**

WHEN CELESTE NG WATCHED

Big Little Lies last spring, she conjured up a fantasy. Glued to the HBO adaptation, she was in awe of its faithful yet distinct take on Liane Moriarty's original novel, and wished the same for her new book, *Little Fires Everywhere*. "Halfway through the series I turned to [my husband] and said, 'Wouldn't it be amazing if somehow, in some crazy universe, Reese Witherspoon read my book, optioned it, and then starred in it?'" she recalls.

It was a pipe dream at the time. But a lot can happen in a year.

Indeed, Ng's "crazy universe" has become reality: Not only is Witherspoon producing and starring (alongside Kerry Washington) in Hulu's series adaptation of *Little Fires*, but a film based on Ng's debut,

Everything I Never Told You, is also in the works with producer Michael De Luca (*The Social Network*). After optioning *Little Fires*, Witherspoon called it "ingenious," adding that the book fits into her effort "to shine a light on female-driven stories... rooted in inspiration, emotion, and truth."

It's the culmination of a string of smashing successes Ng, 38, has experienced recently. Released last September, *Little*

Fires has spent 25 weeks on the *New York Times* best-seller list. (*Everything* spent 46 weeks there in 2014.) Her work strikes a magical balance between the literary and the book-club-ready. Her novels tackle the intricacies of mother-daughter relationships and the pivotal roles that race and class play in American life. But they're not polemical—merely reflective of the author's artistic philosophy, which is, "The political is personal, and

the personal is political."

With *Little Fires*, Ng tested that philosophy on herself. The novel is set in '90s Shaker Heights, Ohio, the community she grew up in. Its sheen of progressive idealism shaped Ng into someone who believed in making the world a better place. But as she wrote *Little Fires*, which centers on an idealized (white) matriarch named Elena Richardson and traces the custody battle over an Asian-American baby girl, her conception of the suburb transformed. "I was trying to look back both at how I had grown up in that community and what that era had been like to grow up in," she says, referring to the "post-racial" ethos of the Clinton era. She came to terms with how Shaker Heights had fallen short of its own ideals—a notion dramatized in the book via the violent torching of the idyllic Richardson home, and the whodunit that follows.

Communicating urgent ideas in a timeless, even breezy fashion is a skill Ng developed through her embrace of life and all of its idiosyncracies. She's an active voice on Twitter and says she's prone to falling into "pits of



← (From left) Author Celeste Ng; Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington (on Witherspoon's Instagram) with their copies of *Little Fires Everywhere*

BETWEEN THE LINES

- **Trump Card** James Comey's book *A Higher Loyalty* topped Amazon's best-seller list after he tweeted "the American people will hear my story very soon."
- **Hoppin' John** John Oliver announced a surprise children's book about a gay bunny, targeted at Mike Pence.

despair" due to the volatile political climate. But Ng takes solace in her Twitter community and its strange, interactive experience—a reclusive novelist she's not.

To speak with Ng is to realize precisely how she's emerged as the novelist of the moment. The pulse of our collective day-to-day filters into her worldview and her work. "Being engaged has helped my writing feel more connected to the world, but also just feel more human," she explains. "The viral tweets that go around, where people show funny things that their parents have said or ridiculous things their dog is doing—that reminds me how interesting people are."

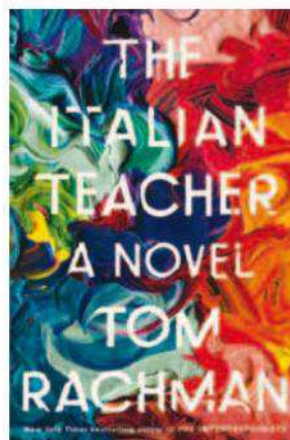
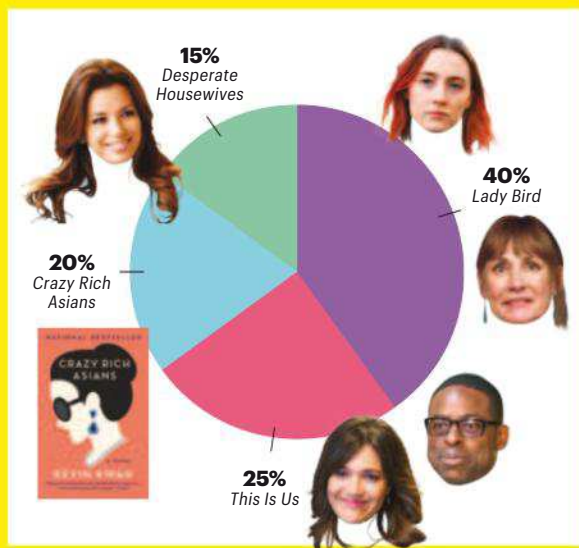
But it's not every day that a story committed to, say, the

nuances of transracial adoption becomes a best-selling phenomenon. It's Ng's flawed, funny, and fully imagined characters—and the prescient conversations sparked by their deeply relatable behavior—that have really hit a nerve. "I honestly don't know why [*Little Fires*] has resonated," she says, humbly. "But for a long time now, there's been an appetite for these kinds of stories."

It's been a whirlwind since Ng first imagined entering that "crazy universe" that has become her reality and now, at long last, she has a bit of time for reflection, but she is at a loss when asked to describe how it feels. "Surreal is the only word I can come up with," she admits. "It's a dream come true."

HER WINNING FORMULA

In the thorny issues they tackle and the emotions they explore, Ng's books perfectly combine elements of several pop culture favorites



The Italian Teacher

BY Tom Rachman

PAGES 339 | GENRE Novel

REVIEW BY Leah Greenblatt @Leahbats

BEHIND EVERY GREAT MAN IS A GREAT BIG shadow, cast long over all the friends, lovers, and acolytes lucky (or unlucky) enough to land inside his world. And then there are the children, who never actually get to choose. As *The Italian Teacher* opens in a paint-spattered Roman studio circa 1955, we meet the appropriately named Bear Bavinsky, a celebrated American artist and incurable rogue—he considers Picasso his closest rival in life and incipient legend—whose bold, colorful canvases are as large-scale as his appetites. The bursts of manic energy that Bear doesn't direct toward working or charming wealthy patrons out of their palazzos trickle down to his young family, a shy Canadian ceramicist named Natalie (not his first wife, and far from his last) and their only child, a son. Five-year-old Charles, affectionately known as Pinch, is everything his father isn't: shy, recessive, chronically unsure of his place in the world. As he grows, the struggle to forge his own identity takes him from Italy to London, Toronto, and rural France, a boy on a perpetually elusive quest for selfness.

Rachman (2010's best-selling *The Imperfectionists*) draws his characters with a specificity so sharp it borders on cruel. Bear is the kind of jolly, oblivious narcissist who devours the oxygen in every room he enters, and Pinch is his little wooden nickel, the lump of dough that somehow failed to rise. But after several hundred pages that seem like sad checkpoints (albeit wonderfully written ones) on a trail of beta-male woe, *Teacher* finds a lovely and unexpected grace note, a left-field redemption made even sweeter by its long and winding path. **B+**



Tangerine

BY Christine Mangan | PAGES 308

GENRE Thriller

REVIEW BY David Canfield
@davidcanfield97

THE CROWDED BOOK-TO-MOVIE pipeline has another hot title to welcome. *Tangerine*, the thriller debut by Christine Mangan, sold in the seven figures to HarperCollins in 2016 and was swiftly optioned by none other than George Clooney; Scarlett Johansson and scribe Abi Morgan (*Shame*, *The Iron Lady*) have since signed on to star and write. Put simply, it's got quite a pedigree.

And it's not hard to see why. *Tangerine* is cinematically engineered, an aromatic stew of ingredients ripe for a big-screen treatment—exotic '50s setting, unreliable narrators with inscrutable motivations, mysteries clouded in madness. The book begins with an ambiguous prologue, then introduces Alice—a near-agoraphobic newlywed transported to Morocco by her obnoxious husband, John—and then her scheming college roommate, Lucy, a woman also new to Tanger who is looking to track down her estranged partner (in crime?). The two women were involved in an unspeakable “accident” during their college years, and Alice appears desperate to forget it; when John disappears upon Lucy's arrival, it seems tragedy is once again around the corner.

The plotting all but demands comparisons to Patricia Highsmith; the sweaty, paranoid atmosphere screams Hitchcock.

This isn't to say *Tangerine* is at the level of those masters. It's deliberately evocative of them. And once that initial intrigue wears off, Mangan's touch loses its luster rather quickly. Her style feels more imitative than original, a dispiriting reminder of what more daring storytellers could do here.

The writing is laborious, particularly early on, and Mangan's Hitchcock emulation turns problematic as confounding sexual politics increasingly drive the narrative. It becomes clear that there's not enough of a story here: The twists are fun, but hardly jaw-dropping, and the descriptive redundancies feel like padding for a book thinner than its page count suggests.

What Mangan has done—quite well—is lay the foundation for a better movie. The book is undeniably readable, even at its clunkiest, and some of its scenes are vividly imagined. One flashback involving Alice, Lucy, and a bracelet should make for an indelibly unsettling screen moment. If only it were as good on the page. **C+**



← George Clooney

DREAM CASTING

ScarJo is aboard the *Tangerine* movie train. Here's how we hope to see the cast round out.



SCARLETT JOHANSSON
AS ALICE

BRADLEY COOPER
AS JOHN

ROONEY MARA
AS LUCY



GAME ON!

The *Walking Dead*'s **Andrew Lincoln** trades zombies for broomsticks in the audiobook version of *Quidditch Through the Ages*.

BY DAVID CANFIELD

How did you get involved with this project?

Most of my actor friends at some point over the last decade have been wizards, Mudbloods, and house-elves of one sort or another, and frankly I was beginning to take it personally. So when this invitation came along, I jumped at the chance. I love the world that J.K. Rowling has created, and I was especially excited about *Quidditch Through the Ages* because of its added association with the charities Comic Relief and Lumos.

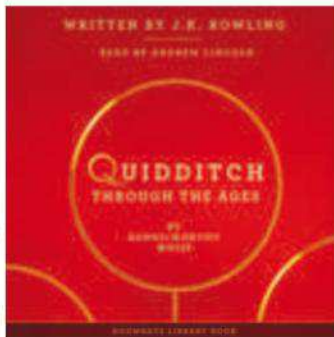
What's been your relationship to *Harry Potter*?

We have seen the movies, many of them more than once. Read the books until our children became old enough to read themselves.... I would call our level of commitment serious.

Were you familiar with the *Harry Potter* audiobook world?

I am totally immersed in the world of *Harry Potter* and have been since the first book appeared. They've been an essential part of our bedtime routine, and [*Potter* audiobook narrator] Stephen Fry has rescued many a car journey from nuclear meltdown in the past. I wouldn't dare to compare myself to the

← Andrew Lincoln lends his dulcet tones to *Quidditch Through the Ages*



great Mr. Fry; he's a national treasure and—in my opinion—is the voice of *Harry Potter*. I prefer to think of this book as it was intended, to augment the story that he so brilliantly realized. It's a reference book for those fans who want an even deeper knowledge of the wizarding universe. When I'm finally invited on *Mastermind*, my specialist subject will be the noble sport of Quidditch: I know my Wigtowns from my Wimbournes.

The *Harry Potter* fandom is, of course, massive. Did you feel pressure to get it right?

I am well aware of the fandom and extreme feelings of devotion people across the world have for *Harry Potter*. I go to Comic-Con in San Diego every year, and there are armies of wizards in attendance and even the odd Golden Snitch. So yes, I took the job very seriously.

How does it compare to the *Walking Dead* fandom?

There seems to be a similar loyalty between the *Walking Dead* and *Harry Potter* fans. Any story that is able to achieve such passion is down to a huge feat of imagination on the part of the writer and, of course, in this case, the brilliant J.K. Rowling.

Who's your favorite *Harry Potter* character?

Dumbledore. In between recording sessions, in my head I was pitching an origin series for Albus' early years, from his late 30s to mid-90s. Think Indiana Jones with spells set in Dickens' time. (*Quidditch* is available for purchase from Audible.)

“

MOST OF MY ACTOR FRIENDS HAVE BEEN WIZARDS, MUDBLOODS, AND HOUSE-ELVES OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER, AND I WAS BEGINNING TO TAKE IT PERSONALLY.”

—ANDREW LINCOLN

NEW & NOTABLE

Your guide to the buzziest books in stores now

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TRUE STORIES

THE BIG PICTURE BY BEN FRITZ **HISTORY** E

From the Marvel boom (sparked by Robert Downey Jr. in *Iron Man*) to the dwindling of star power, Hollywood has dramatically transformed over the past 20 years. Fritz offers fascinating tidbits in his unpacking, and argues that we're entering a new golden age of moviemaking.

RAW BY LAMONT "U-GOD" HAWKINS **MEMOIR** E A

Founding Wu-Tang Clan member U-God provides a frank, intimate account of his journey from the streets of Brooklyn to create one of hip-hop's most iconic groups.

ACCLAIMED FICTION

AMERICAN HISTORIES BY JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN **SHORT STORIES** E A

Wideman's 50-year writing career has won him countless awards, and the author proves his continued vitality, reimagining historical figures with vigor and soul.

FEAST DAYS BY IAN MACKENZIE **NOVEL** E A

This highly anticipated new offering from MacKenzie poignantly contrasts the political breakdown of Brazil with the marital breakdown of a pair of expatriates.

MEMENTO PARK BY MARK SARVAS **NOVEL** E A

With echoes of the Helen Mirren-starring *Woman in Gold*, this story begins with the discovery of a painting thought to be looted during WWII and ends as a satisfying meditation on father-son dynamics and the power of art.

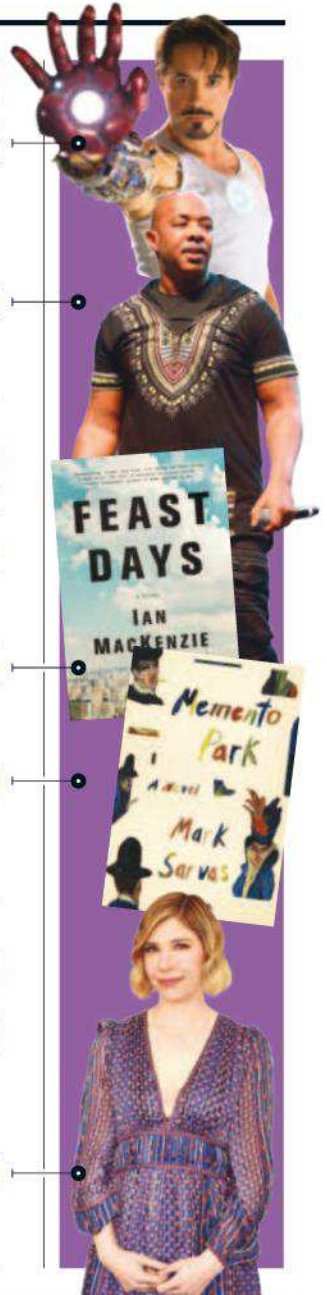
LGBTQ

THE DIAMOND SETTER BY MOSHE SAKAL **NOVEL** E

Translated from Hebrew by Jessica Cohen, Sakal's searing tale spans nearly a century of life in the Middle East, spotlighting Tel Aviv's vibrant queer scene as well as the conflicts and tragedies surrounding it.

STRAY CITY BY CHELSEY JOHNSON **NOVEL** E C A

Carrie Brownstein is a fan of Johnson's naturalistic debut, which explores the power of chosen families and traces the aftermath of one gay woman's shock pregnancy.



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KEY E > E-BOOK C > CD A > AUDIBLE

A Star Is (Re)born as a Book Mogul



She's conquered your TV and your closet. Now passionate reader **Sarah Jessica Parker** wants your bookshelves, too. She tells EW how her lifelong literary fandom has led to her own book club and, launching this June, a fiction imprint. **BY LEAH GREENBLATT**

You've spoken about your love of public libraries. But as a famous person, can you really go to one unnoticed?

I was just there yesterday! [Laughs] Sure was. I went in to get a book for one of my daughters, who is deeply committed to the *Harry Potter* series. I love reading on the subway but more people recognize me there, so it takes some effort on my part, to be alone in ways that are gracious. But libraries,

people have their heads down. *Nobody* is interested in me. It's such a wonderful place for people to disappear. There's almost no place I can think of, with the exception of a church or a temple or a mosque, that demands that kind of quiet and respect for others.

You're the honorary Book Club Central chair for the American Library Association, and your latest pick is Jonathan Miles'

***Anatomy of a Miracle*, about a disabled Iraq War veteran who suddenly regains the use of his legs. What drew you to it?**

We were all in a minivan at the ALA convention last June and [Gone Girl editor] Lindsay Sagnette started describing it, and I was so intrigued. So when we got back I was like, "Can you get me a copy?" I just thought it was a great, great read.

You'll be launching your own imprint, SJP for Hogarth, this summer with Fatima Farheen Mirza's debut, *A Place for Us*. Why make that leap?

Literary fiction has a very special place for me. Some people's estimation of me, I'm sure, is that I'm untested, that I haven't earned a place in this world. But having an opportunity to support Fatima, to press that book into people's hands, that's all I really want—to share stories that are not always obvious to readers but I think are deeply important and compelling. We have the humble goal of [releasing] perhaps four books a year, so my hope is that I just get to continue to find great books that move me, that cultivate empathy and curiosity and let us get to know strangers better.



MERRY AND QUITE CONTRARY

An update of classic fairy tales from the writer formerly known as Mallory Ortberg mixes humor, horror, and a healthy dose of feminism.

BY DANA SCHWARTZ

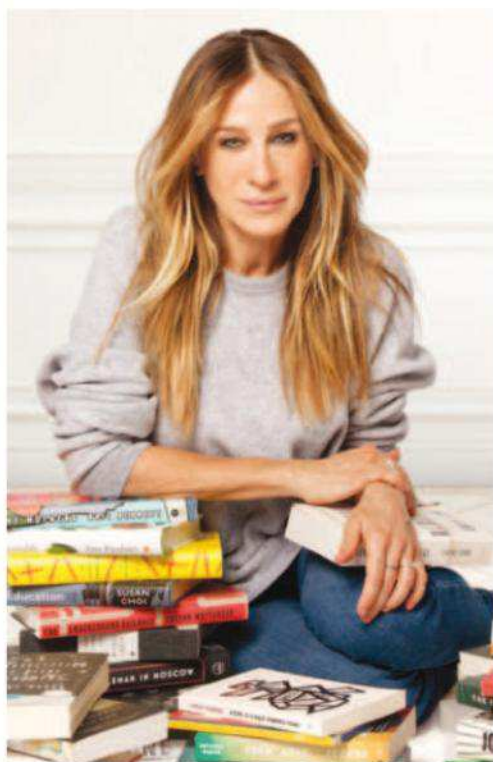
In *The Merry Spinster*, Daniel Mallory Ortberg dances through familiar children's tales with a tone equal parts playful and sadistic. His version of *The Velveteen Rabbit* is a twisted meditation on the progression of greed; his take on *The Wind in the Willows* is unspeakably unsettling. As he did in his first book, *Texts From Jane Eyre*, Ortberg cuts down to the center of beloved cultural narratives with signature wit to reveal the dark beating heart that was there all along.

"The fairy-tale books I read growing up were not sanitized, so it didn't feel like, 'Here I am, coming in with my bloody hands to mess around with the safe stories of your youth!'" says Ortberg. "These were stories already deeply committed to exploring the idea of unsafety, and I was continuing the work that had already begun with those earlier writers."

Ortberg—who recently came out as trans and changed his first name to Daniel—also explores assumptions about gender in his book. "I'm trying to capture a sense of something off-kilter, that this world is very familiar in some ways and not in others," he says. In several stories, *daughters* is a sexually neutral word, uncoupled from preconceptions. "I'm not sure what to expect for this character, and I'm not sure whether I should be afraid for them or afraid of them."

One thing's for sure: After reading *The Merry Spinster*, you'll never look at Mr. Toad the same way again. "His compulsion around driving feels terrifying and alcoholic," says Ortberg. "*The Wind in the Willows* is a distressing book that obviously has lots of lyrical descriptions of rivers, but I never mistook that for civility or safety as a child, and rereading it, I don't see that now."

↓ Divorce star and book lover Sarah Jessica Parker



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JUST HIT AND
WE WENT FROM
DONATING TO
THE FOOD BANK
TO NEEDING IT.**

Donna, Louisiana

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IS A
STORY
WE CAN
END.**

FEEDINGAMERICA.ORG



THIS WEEK'S
HITS &
MISSES

The Bullseye

BY MARC SNETIKER @MarcSnetiker



Trump Jr. allegedly had an affair with *Celebrity Apprentice* contestant Aubrey O'Day. This never would have happened if George and Carolyn were judging.



Left: J. Paul Getty, *Trust*.
Right: J. Paul Getty,
All the Money in the World.
Weird: this much J. Paul Getty.



Fifth Harmony split up. Damn, just when we were starting to learn the names of the other four Harmonies.



After *The Shape of Water*, Freeform's mermaid show is apparently now your Emmys front-runner.



Shia LaBeouf to star in movie about Shia LaBeouf, playing the father of Sh...actually, we'd say his name a third time, but then he might appear and do this sooner.



Kanye West fans launch Yeezy Dating. Meanwhile, membership still remains zero over at OKChainsmokers.



Happy March Madness to whatever team uses this mascot.



Nat Geo's *One Strange Rock* is proof there are good roles for planets over 4.5 billion.



Willy Wonka's Mike Teevee makes surprise appearance on *Jeopardy!* Next week: Augustus Gloop does *The Biggest Loser*.



Amazon's *Lord of the Rings* series will reportedly cost \$500 million. It would have been only \$400 million if Gandalf wasn't such a diva about thread count.



New Gods, meet your new godmother.



On *Champions*, NBC gives us a fierce competitor who has nothing to do with the Olympics.



If you can't wake up early to have coffee during the royal wedding, you can always stay up late chugging rosé during the Lifetime movie.



Blink-182 announce Vegas residency, wherein 182 is also how many audience members would rather be at Celine.



Noisy faceless robots screaming in your business. Nope, not Twitter.

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